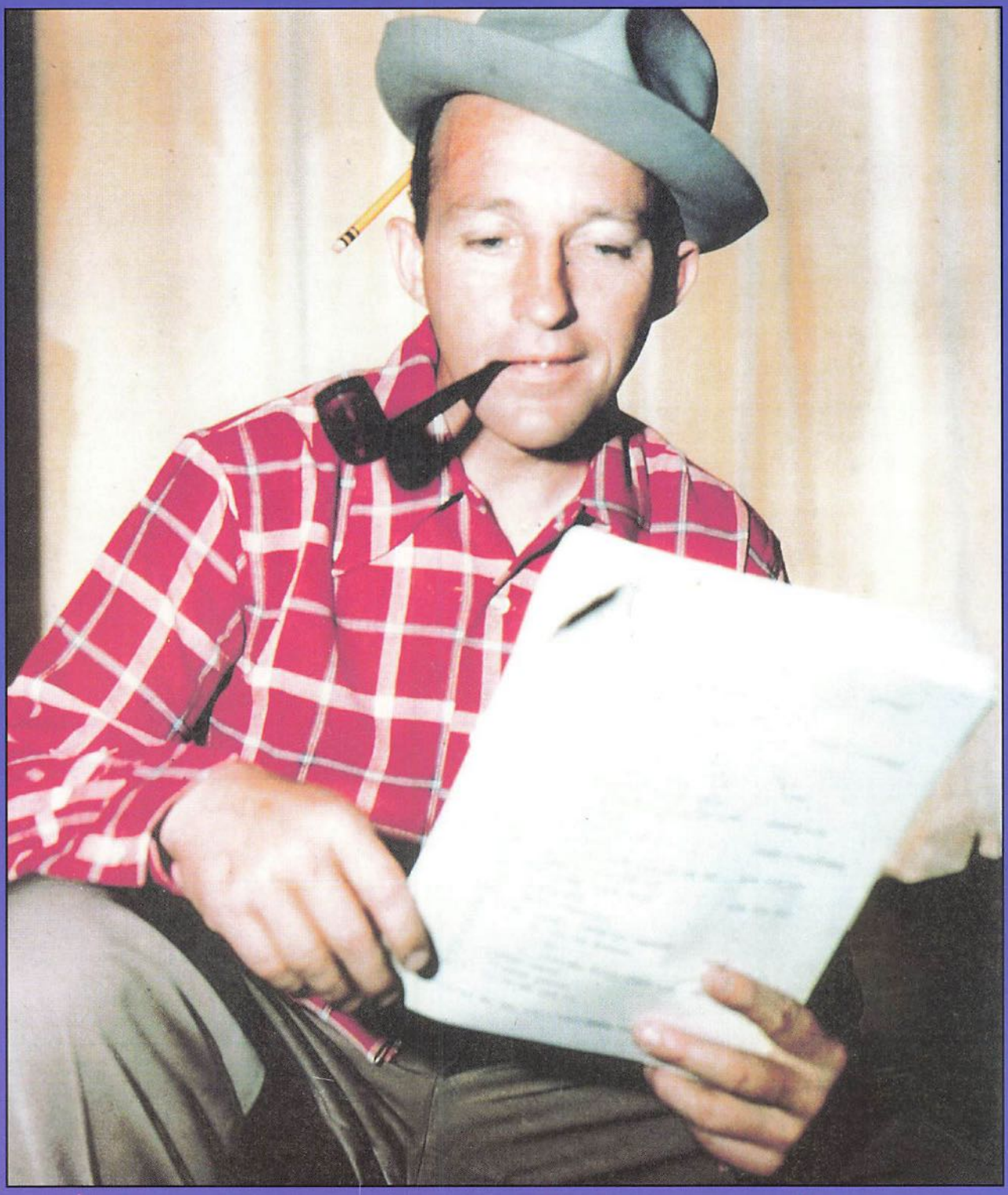
BING

SUMMER
2000

No. 125



THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

Founded 1950 www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~iccircle/
(also http.//members.aol.com/macwilmslo/BING_magazine.html)

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Hon Secretary & Treasurer	MICHAEL CRAMPTON	19 Carrholm Crescent Chapel Allerton Leeds LS7 2NL Tel/Fax: 0113 2689556 e-mail: icc@iccircle.globalnet.co.uk
Magazine Editor	MALCOLM MACFARLANE	3 Osborne Close Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 2EE Tel: 01625 528942 e-mail: Macwilmslo@aol.com
U.S. & Canada Representative	F.B. (Wig) WIGGINS	5608 North 34th Street Arlington, Virginia 22207, USA Tel: (703) 241-5608
Australian & New Zealand Representative	DAVID CURRINGTON	34A Geoffrey Street Turramurra, NSW Australia 2074
European Representative	ETTY GITS	Kabouwstraat 7 4817 GB Breda The Netherlands Tel: 076 - 5719 804 e-mail: e.gits@hetnet.nl
Assistant Secretary/ CD's/Records	JIM REILLY	27 Beaulieu Road North End Portsmouth Hants PO2 ODN Tel: 02392 666677 e-mail: jimreilly@freenet.co.uk
Films	KEITH PARKINSON	"Meadowcroft" Houghtons Lane Eccleston St. Helens WA10 5LD Tel: 01744 22248
Radio & TV (Current Developments)	BERT BISHOP	Tideway, 100 Imperial Avenue, Maylandsea, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 6AJ Tel: 01621 742144
Radio & TV (Research)	LIONEL PAIRPOINT	86 Ellesmere Avenue Mill Hill London NW7 3HD Tel: 0208 959 3394 e-mail: lionelpairp@hotmail.com
Photographs Editor/ Archivist	RON BOSLEY	10 Fountains Avenue Simonstone, Burnley Lancashire BB12 7PY Tel: 01282 779924

CONTENTS

Page Nos.

Editorial 4
Secretary / Treasurer's Report 5
The First White Christmas 6
How Green Was My Valley? 6
Bing in the USA 8
The Crosby 13
What a Swell Party She Is 13
Bing Crosby - The Young Groaner 15
Comparing Crosby, Sinatra 18
The Most Underrated Singer? 19
Trading Post 20
Books 'N' Bing 21
A Southern Memoir 22
Celluloid Crosby 25
The A - Z of Bing's Movies 27
Time Marches Back 28
One Sweet Letter From You 29
Lionel's Lines "Robin and Rose's" 33
I Never Had To Scream 36
Gone Fishin' 39
Once in a While 40
Leslie Gaylor - An Obituary 41
Bert Bishop's "Bing On the Box" 43
Hofstra University Conference on Bing 48
Keeping Track 49
Leeds 2000 54

Membership renewals fall due on 1st. January each year and subscription rates effective for 2000 are:

UK	£10 per annum
Mainland Europe, including Eire	£11 per annum
USA and Canada	US $20 per annum
Australia and New Zealand	A$30 per annum
South America	£15 per annum
Japan	£15 per annum

All remittances should be sent in **£ sterling** payable to 'Michael Crampton - ICC' with the exception of (a) US and Canadian members who should send their remittances in US dollars to F. B. Wiggins (b) Australian and New Zealand members who should pay David Currington in Australian dollars (c) Mainland European members (not Eire) who should pay Etty Gits in £ sterling. For addresses see inside front cover.

Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor.
Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should be sent to the Hon. Secretary/Treasurer.

BING is the official journal of the International Crosby Circle and is published in the Spring, Summer and Winter of each year. Opinions expressed in articles are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the ICC. All original material © Copyright ICC 2000.

EDITORIAL

'Here Comes Summer' the song used to go and it gives me great pleasure to echo those words as I introduce our Summer edition. Lots to read and lots to look forward to with enthusiasm.

First of all though, disappointing news. I mentioned in the last issue that I had made formal submissions to the Press Complaints Commission regarding the malicious and inaccurate articles published in the UK last December about Bing's FBI files. Sadly my complaints were not successful although I confess that I am still baffled by the outcome. It was felt that the articles were expressions of editorial opinion and did not therefore contravene the Code. Disappointing but at least the newspapers concerned now know we exist and will hopefully check their facts more carefully before printing misleading articles about Bing in future.

Lionel's radio book '....And Here's Bing!' is not yet ready as I write these words on June 29 but I hope to go over to Ireland in the next week or so to finish it off and get it despatched to all of you who have been so patient.

The death of Leslie Gaylor in March was a shock to us all and his loss inevitably made me think of the tremendous efforts he made to promote Bing over the years. As a result, Bing made TV appearances that would not have happened otherwise, radio shows featured Bing and so on. Since Bing's death, no one has really consistently promoted him professionally. The family have taken a low profile and we as fan clubs have not done enough externally having been content to leave matters to a few dedicated members. As we look ahead to the centenary of Bing's birth in 2003, perhaps we ought to follow Leslie's example and have an action plan to make sure that the maximum amount of publicity is generated and that we bring back Bing to the public's notice as much as is possible in the 21st. century. I shall put a few thoughts together in outline and circulate them around the team and to one or two other interested members over the next few months. Just imagine what we could do, if we all concentrated our efforts in a focused way. We could move mountains!

Later on in this edition, Wig describes in detail a recent lecture by Gary Giddins on Bing and Louis Armstrong. Gary has confirmed that the first volume of his book "Bing Crosby: A Pocketful of Dreams, The Early Years, 1903-1940" is still on target to be published this Autumn. The book will run to about 450-500 pages and the publishers do not want it longer than that. This may however give Gary real problems in getting the rest of the story into volume 2 (due May 2003) but he will cross that hurdle when

he reaches it. We look forward to carrying a review of Gary's tome in the Winter issue of BING and giving details on how to obtain the book.

The book should give us a marvellous lift in terms of publicity for Bing and another wonderful development is a proposed three day conference on Bing to be run by Hofstra University, New York in November 2002. Wig gives full details in a separate article towards the end of the magazine and this conference should ensure that Bing receives the academic recognition he has lacked in recent years. We have several articles on this theme in this magazine which make good reading.

The front cover this time is a new photograph obtained over the Internet through an Ebay auction very reasonably and the back cover shows the ICC calendar for 2003. A separate flyer about this is enclosed and we are determined to make this calendar the best yet.

So, I hope that the sun will shine for you, literally and metaphorically, as you digest the contents of BING #125.

Malcolm Macfarlane

SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

Our 50th year has got off to a wonderful start with the publication of BING 124 with its fine balance of fresh information and a look back at the achievements of past officers and contributors. Members wrote to say how much they had enjoyed reading the journal and they are continually surprised to discover new and interesting facts about Bing's career. We hope that journals 125 & 126 will continue to bring you interest and that we can be truly an International Crosby Circle.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome the following and trust that they will enjoy their membership of the ICC.

ENGLAND

Marianne Lees (Norfolk), Justin Byam (Gloucester), H B Bath (Eastbourne), John Tracy (Bedfordshire), Peter Lane (Gloucester), Harry Likover (Thornton Cleveleys).

SINGAPORE

Ian Bell (Chancery Court).

DONATIONS

We are most grateful to the following members who gave generously in addition to their annual fee:
Peter West, Peter Howard, Peter Carpenter, Richard Lane, Yvonne Bowles and Don Love.

MEMBERSHIP 2000

Following a first and second reminder letter to around 100 members we are pleased to report that only 13 renewals are now outstanding and our membership total for 2000 exceeds 950. We would like 1000 in 2000 so trust that all members will promote the ICC whenever they get the opportunity.

DEATHS

With sadness we have learnt of the deaths of **Theo Harris** and **Tony Holmes** (both of London), **Ena Hooley** (aged 93, of the North East) and as members will be now be aware, our dear late friend and Honorary Life Member - **Leslie Gaylor.**

Leslie's passing casts a shadow across our 50th anniversary celebrations but we are consoled to learn that Leslie enjoyed Bing's voice almost to the last and that his family appreciated our wreath and the attendance at his funeral of Jim Reilly to represent all of Leslie's friends in ICC. I would like to thank Jim Reilly for his eulogy on Leslie which he read at the funeral service and which captures many of the attributes that made Leslie a special and extraordinary 'ordinary' human being .

Jim's fine tribute to Leslie does justice to the man and we will forever be in debt to Leslie for all his hard work and perseverance on behalf of Bing and his recordings. Leslie was an ordinary guy who struck up a lifetime friendship with 'The Singer of the Century' and he encouraged hundreds of Bing enthusiasts to enrich their lives by savouring and collecting Bing's recorded voice. Leslie's enthusiasm for his subject is writ large in the Crosby journals of the past 50 years and he will be missed very much. We will miss him and his friendly letters !

Our condolences are extended to all family members.

A LETTER FROM KATHRYN

I was very pleased to receive a note from Kathryn Crosby thanking me for my efforts on behalf of Bing and the Voice of the Century! We look forward to further support from Kathryn in the years ahead.

SALES TO MEMBERS

MICHAEL FREEDLAND, DIARY OF A LIFETIME AND 2000 CALENDAR

6 copies each of the above remain for sale to members at the following prices-
Diary Of A Lifetime £12, Michael Freedland the illustrated biography £13 and 2000 calendar £5.50

LEEDS 2000

We are hoping that as many new members as possible will choose to attend the anniversary celebrations at Leeds on October 1st and you will have the added bonus of the attendance of Bing's butler Alan Fisher, providing that no unforeseen snags arise. Do come along to see, hear and enjoy Bing, 50 years on from the founding of the British Bing Club in March 1950.

LATEST CDs

No! I'm not taking over Jim's role I'm just wanting to thank John McNicholas and Wig Wiggins for their latest compilations. On the one hand, John gives us a series that represents all Bing's commercial output between 1926 and 1936 whilst Wig helps make another fine addition to the MCA catalogue.

Congratulations to you both and thanks to MCA for keeping their CDs available.

Until December, my best wishes to all our members around the world.

Michael Crampton

The Top 100 Catholics of the Century

Gord Atkinson drew my attention to a poll held by readers of The Daily Catholic newspaper of Vista, California to select the top 100 Catholics of the twentieth century. Bing was one of those selected and the covering article can be found on the paper's web site at http://www.DailyCatholic.org. There are a few inaccuracies but overall it is a warm and friendly piece which defends Bing strongly against the scurrilous stories which have emerged since his death. .

The Best TV Ads of All Time

In March, The Sunday Times and the UK's Channel 4 asked readers and viewers to nominate the best TV ads of all time. The Guinness 'Surfers' advert was first with the Smash ad featuring the Martians second. In all 100 ads are listed and I was delighted to see that Bing's 1962 Shell advert "We're Going Well" was placed in the top 100. Wonderful after so many years to see that it is remembered.

Architectural Digest

Hollywood at Home!

Norman Wolfe kindly provided a copy of the April 2000 edition of this high quality magazine which featured the homes of various Hollywood stars such as Stewart Granger, Clark Gable and Glenn Ford and more importantly, Bing and his Camarillo Street property. Lovely photographs of the house interiors and exterior plus two of Bing support a short article about Bing's time in the property. The same magazine featured Bing's home in Rancho Santa Fe in their April 1996 edition.

The History of Popular Music

I mentioned in the last edition that the BBC were putting together a major series on this subject which is intended to be televised in the Autumn of 2001. My contact at the BBC asked me to provide a list of just 10 songs which are considered the most definitive Bing songs. My reply was:

> "You are right, it is impossible but I'll give it a go. Here are the 10 songs which for me provide the defining moments at various stages of Bing's career. If you ask me again tomorrow I'll probably have slightly different choices!
> I Surrender Dear (1931)
> Please (1932)
> Silent Night (1935)
> Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams (1939)
> San Antonio Rose
> You Are My Sunshine
> White Christmas (1942)
> Swinging on a Star
> Dear Hearts and Gentle People
> True Love"

We could argue forever about this list and it was a pity I couldn't fit in a song from the Whiteman days. No 'Brother Can You Spare a Dime' or 'Home on the Range'. Surely 'Pennies from Heaven' and 'Pocketful of Dreams' should have been there. Fancy leaving out 'Only Forever' and Bing's many duets with other artists. An impossible task? It certainly was! George Patmore was the only other member to write with his thoughts on the matter and his top ten were (in date order):

1931 Dinah
1932 Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?
1933 Blue Prelude
1933 Home on the Range
1939 Sing a Song of Sunbeams
1940 Tumbling Tumbleweeds
1940 Yes Indeed
1942 Ain't Got a Dime to My Name
1947 Ain't Doin' Bad Doin' Nothin'
1951 Quizas, Quizas, Quizas

The First White Christmas

We all know that Bing first recorded his most famous song in May, 1942. There has been some debate about when he first performed it in public and it has been suggested that he first sang the song on the Kraft Music Hall of December 25, 1941. Lionel Pairpoint mentions the uncertainty about this in his wonderful radio book "And Here's Bing!" and whilst proof reading the book, I thought that it would be nice to verify the facts as far as possible in the absence of a recording of the show.

During my holiday in the USA earlier this year, the librarian at Charleston mentioned that there were two universities who appeared to have a large collection of Crosby related items. One was Gonzaga which of course we knew all about and the other was Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, which was a complete surprise to me. On my return home, I searched Duke University's archives via the Internet and discovered that the University was the repository for the J. Walter Thompson collection. This advertising agency was heavily involved in the Kraft Music Hall and there are many files which relate to this show, including it seems all the scripts!

I made contact with Jacqueline Reid, the Reference Archivist in the Hartman Center for Sales, Advertising and Marketing History at the University, and asked if I could have a copy of the script for the December 25, 1941 programme. There was no problem with this other than a not insignificant charge and as an alternative I asked if someone could simply look at the script and tell me what songs were sung and in what order. Jacqueline quickly did this (without charge) and this is what she found:-

Adeste Fideles (Bing)
I Can't Give You Anything But Love (Connie Boswell)
Chattanooga Choo-Choo (Bing and The Music Maids)
Oh! How I Hate to Get Up in the Morning (Bing and The Music Maids)
Rose O'Day (Bing and Connie Boswell)
White Christmas (Bing and The Music Maids)
When Christmas Is Gone (Connie Boswell)
Shepherd Serenade (Bing and The Music Maids)
Silent Night (Bing)

It seems that script was lodged after the programme aired as it contains manuscript alterations and a note that the show went off air 20 seconds before 'Silent Night' ended.

So at last, we have confirmation that 'White Christmas' was sung by Bing on the December 25, 1941 show and now all that is needed is a good recording of it!

Malcolm Macfarlane

How Green Was My Valley?

Some months ago, I was contacted by Johnny Keating whom I remembered as having a hit with the theme from 'Z Cars' in the 1960s. Johnny also provided the backing for Bing on two tracks in 1966 and he was seeking copies of them. I duly provided these and I asked Johnny to tell me about his association with our man. This is what he wrote.

My first strong recollection of Bing Crosby was when my father, a devoted Crosby fan, brought home the 78rpm recording of "Silent Night" and "Adeste Fideles" ("Come All You Faithful"). He obviously associated Bing and these two 'hymns' with his early childhood as an altar boy in St. Patrick's Chapel in Edinburgh. (He and his younger brother were orphaned when he was just seven years old). These two tracks, especially the one sung in

Latin) were destined to become his very favourite Bing Crosby recordings of all time. This was around 1940, I guess.

Now, fast-forward to 1965 where I was engaged as Musical Director and Arranger for the British actress and singing star Shani Wallis (then and still resident in Los Angeles). She was home on a visit to London where she had decided to do her next album for American label Kapp Records. I was recommended to her and soon we had a good album in the can. She chose to include one of my own songs which consequently became the title of the album "I'm a Girl." Her next two engagements were scheduled for two weeks in Harrah's Club in Lake Tahoe, Nevada followed by ten days in Columbus Ohio. Shani and I hit it off musically and with some finishing touches still to be made to the album she invited me to come to the USA to help with the overdubbing. She also needed a conductor for the live appearances, so Bingo! California Here I come!

In those two short weeks in Lake Tahoe I must have met forty or fifty real big music stars to mention just a few:- Alice Faye, Phil Harris, Donald O'Connor, Wayne Newton, Shari Lewis, Harry James, Matt Monro. And - Bing Crosby! I have never been 'starstruck' but I admit to being 'on a high' practically twenty-four hours of every day. But Bing was the one in whom I was most interested as he was not only a world household name and my Dad's favourite, but closer to my heart - a self-confessed jazz and big band fan.

If my memory serves me correctly, Bing was following Shani into Harrah's Club and whoever was the forthcoming attraction normally popped in backstage to say hello and stick around for a while. As I have said I was on a constant high - not your regular alcoholic high just a plain walking-on-air, 'this-is-the-life-for-me' high. Bing was a very laid back guy, very approachable and friendly, a seemingly unruffled type. For whatever reason, a mad rush of blood you might say, I'm still not sure, I felt a strong urge to entertain him, to shock him a little, to make him laugh in some way. Now, Shani had a selection of stage clothes and things she occasionally used in her act and with her approval and help we set about transforming my appearance in order to unhinge him a little. First to hand was a beautifully coiffured wig. Then came the gorgeous pink boa slung over my shoulders. Then came the final touches of bright red lipstick and overly exaggerated pink powder applied to the cheeks - every inch a lady - well, nearly. The approach was simple: straight-faced, a little 'come on' patter followed by some innocuous bland stranger to stranger niceties, such as "How are you, Mr. Crosby? I believe you are an avid jazz fan. Who are your favourites, etc., etc. He went along with it for a bit, joining in the charade. But I failed to ruffle him. Eventually we both started to laugh. Game over. I have a coloured photo of myself in the getup (unfortunately minus Bing) which, to my horror, looks uncannily like my dear departed Aunty Mary. I still have fun looking at it occasionally but it will remain forever for my eyes only. Unless, of course, you wish to make an offer I can't refuse. I must protest though against any odd thoughts you may have regarding my sexuality. Even my two sons and daughter regard me as daft, but straight, just for the record.

Yes, let's move on to the record. When I arrived in Hollywood (1965) I decided that this was the place for me. Who wouldn't when offered a Warner Bros. Recording Artist Contract (with my own 27-piece Orchestra, The Keating Sound), a 13-week Television Series ("The Jean Arthur Show"), and to top it all a major American movie ("Hotel"). It was sometime during all this activity that Sonny Burke, the then Head of Warner Bros. Music Department and long time personal musical associate of Bing, asked me to do a single for the great man himself - an offer I couldn't refuse. The important points surrounding this recording were: (1) The two songs were from a new Broadway Show "How Green Was My Valley" just about to open in New York and must be recorded, like yesterday, in order to coincide with the hype of the opening. (2) Bing was working in San Francisco and this meant it was impossible for him to come to Los Angeles to record. This necessitated a certain set of circumstances, unusual to say the least, especially way back then. Bing hadn't heard the songs but trusted Sonny Burke's judgement that they would be good for him to record. Not knowing the songs meant that Bing could not set the appropriate keys (an extremely vital factor for any singer) so this very personal choice was left to me to figure out. Sonny also pointed out that at this later period in Bing's singing career his higher register, as is common with all singers in similar circumstances, should be given careful consideration. There was also the problem of tempo changes - those bits near the end where a slight slowing down can enhance the emotive impact of a performance. Added to these idiosyncrasies was the strange situation - at least back then in those days - for a conductor to have no singer to conduct or to follow. In effect, I had to become Bing Crosby. As Bing, I had to choose my keys, my key changes, my tempos and tempo changes, my loud parts and quiet parts and be sure to see that the orchestra directed by Johnny Keating faithfully and sympathetically followed my interpretation. What frightening power was placed in my hands. This was Bing Crosby. My father's favourite singer. The great star of Stage, Screen, Radio and Recording colossus. Help!

As it happened "How Green Was My Valley" was a Broadway failure so that was that. I got a 'test pressing' of the finished recording - voice and all - which I unfortunately lost and so for all those years I have never had in my possession any form of proof that I actually conducted and arranged a record for the great Bing Crosby. That was until recently. I now proudly possess two cassette copies of the record date for which I am eternally grateful: one kindly sent to me from California from Hobie and Cathie Wilson of "Bing's Friends and Collectors Society," the other from Cheshire, England from Malcolm Macfarlane of the International Crosby Circle. My intention now is to give the BBC a copy of the recording thereby hopefully adding in some way to the historical legend of the great and unforgettable Bing Crosby. One final question you may be asking yourself: "What did Bing think of the songs and recording?" The plain answer is: "I never did find out." The opportunity for us to meet again never did arise before family reasons compelled me to return to London. Kind regards to all members of the Bing Crosby Fan Clubs.

Johnny Keating

BING IN THE USA

SPOKANE SINGS CROSBY

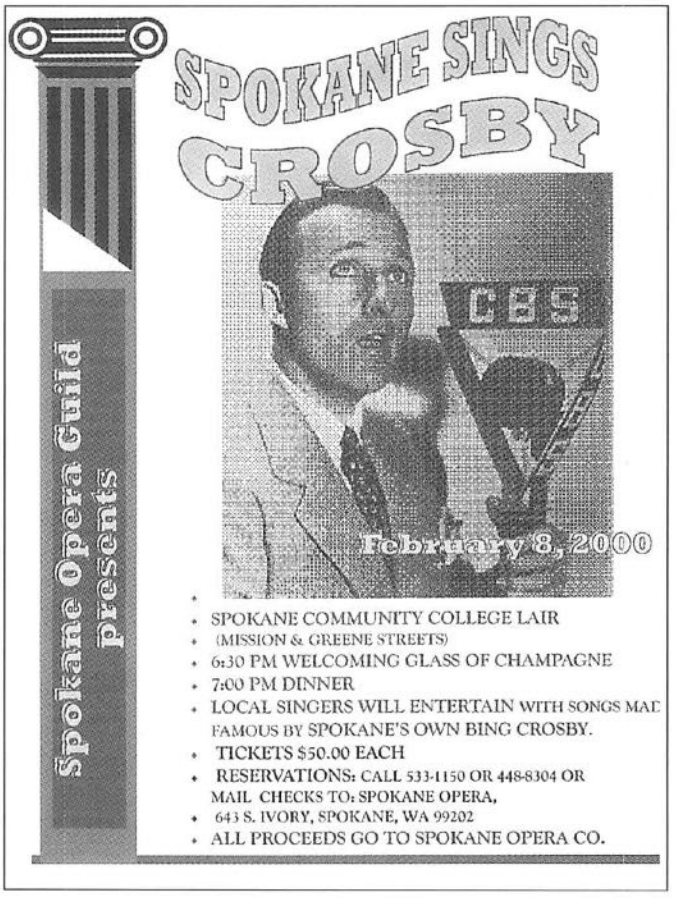
On February 9 my wife, Laura, was listening to WTOP, our all-news radio station in the Washington, D.C. area, when she was surprised to hear the following announcement from the national CBS Radio Network, with "Please" playing softly in the background:

> *"Last night, a show called 'Spokane Sings Crosby,' brought out the diehard fans of the crooner of yesteryear. A dozen singers performed in a setting that resembled the Cocoanut Grove during a live CBS radio broadcast. Ah! It was a night of nights for those who enjoy the crooner of crooners, Bing Crosby."*

Seeking more information, we telephoned CBS headquarters in Washington, D.C., and learned that the announcement about Bing had been provided by one of their West Coast correspondents, Stephen Kaufman, from the town of Chattaroy in Washington State, which is near Spokane. Further telephone calls eventually put us in touch with Stephen Kaufman himself, who told me much more about the special tribute to Bing that had been held the previous evening at Spokane's Community College to benefit the Spokane Opera Company. Stephen also gave me the name of Jim McArthur of Spokane, who had organized and was the Master of Ceremonies for the gala evening honoring Bing and his music. During the evening of February 8, a group of twelve singers (including Jim McArthur) took turns in performing many of Bing's familiar hits for an appreciative audience, plus several songs that were not quite as well known, accompanied by an instrumental trio composed of piano, bass and drums. According to Jim McArthur, the evening was a most successful fund-raiser for Spokane's Opera Guild and a fitting tribute to "Spokane's favorite son", something that doesn't happen very often these days. I also learned that the SPOKANE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW (the local newspaper that Bing used to deliver as a young boy) had published a fully-illustrated two-page special about Bing on February 6 in conjunction with the Opera's forthcoming Crosby gala, which was described as follows:

> *Evening of Crosby Music Planned*
>
> *Here's a chance to immerse yourself in the music of Bing Crosby. The Spokane Opera Guild will present a special show called "Spokane Sings Crosby" at Spokane Community College on February 8. The setting will evoke the glory days of Bing. It will be a "Cocoanut Grove" type night club where a "live radio" broadcast will take place. A group of Spokane singers will sing 23 songs made famous by Bing, including "Where the Blue of the Night", "I Surrender, Dear", "Swinging on a Star", "I've Got a Pocketful of Dreams" and White Christmas".*

Other Crosby favorites that were performed included "Please", "June in January", "Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?", "Thine Alone",' "Blue Skies", "Sunday, Monday Or Always", "Easy To Remember", "Dear Hearts and Gentle People", "Play a Simple Melody", "The Second Time Around",' "Zing a Little Zong" and "Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral". According to all reports, this unusual evening was a well-planned and well-attended tribute to Bing in his hometown. And I would like to thank Stephen Kaufman of the CBS Radio Network and Jim McArthur of the Spokane opera Guild for providing me with details for this report for BING magazine, and for their successful efforts to keep Bing's music alive and well in the great Northwest.


SPOKANE SINGS CROSBY
Spokane Opera Guild presents
CBS
February 8, 2000
SPOKANE COMMUNITY COLLEGE LAIR
(MISSION & GREENE STREETS)
6:30 PM WELCOMING GLASS OF CHAMPAGNE
7:00 PM DINNER
LOCAL SINGERS WILL ENTERTAIN WITH SONGS MAD FAMOUS BY SPOKANE'S OWN BING CROSBY.
TICKETS $50.00 EACH
RESERVATIONS: CALL 533-1150 OR 448-8304 OR MAIL CHECKS TO: SPOKANE OPERA,
643 S. IVORY, SPOKANE, WA 99202
ALL PROCEEDS GO TO SPOKANE OPERA CO.

BING'S FILMS ON TELEVISION

Some of Bing's films do continue to appear on the national cable television networks in the United States every month, but not any of his rarely-seen early Paramount Pictures, unfortunately. During the past four months, the following films were shown:

March 2000

ANYTHING GOES (1956) — THE COUNTRY GIRL — HIGH SOCIETY

April 2000

THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S — THE COUNTRY GIRL ROAD TO MOROCCO — ROAD TO SINGAPORE — ROAD TO UTOPIA - ROAD TO ZANZIBAR — ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS

May 2000

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT - THE COUNTRY GIRL — GOING

HOLLYWOOD — HIGH SOCIETY - MAN ON FIRE — REACHING FOR THE MOON — ROAD TO ZANZIBAR

June 2000

ANYTHING GOES (1956) — A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT — THE COUNTRY GIRL — THE ROAD TO HONG KONG — ROAD TO MOROCCO — ROAD TO SINGAPORE — ROAD TO UTOPIA — ROAD TO ZANZIBAR ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS — THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT!

A NEW BING CROSBY COMPACT DISC

(But You Won't Find This Version In The Music Stores!)

For the fifth year in a row, fellow ICC member Andy McKaie, Senior Vice President of Universal Music in California, asked me to work with him to produce a new Bing CD for sale in music stores to the general public. For this CD, we decided to group together for the first time all of Bing's Decca recordings of the many songs that he had introduced in films that were either nominated for, or won, the Academy Award for "Best Song" of the year. To fill out the CD, we added Bing's Decca recordings of Academy Award song winners that had been introduced by other artists. In order to make the CD as complete as possible, I recommended that Universal include Bing's 1934 Brunswick recording of his first nominated song, "Love In Bloom", his 1956 Capitol recording of "True Love", and his last nominee, "The Second Time Around", which was issued as a single by MGM in 1960. Universal was successful in obtaining the rights to include "Love In Bloom" and "The Second Time Around". Unfortunately, they were not able to license the use of "True Love".

Another difficulty arose over my liner notes for the CD booklet. Here the culprit was the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, which retains copyright control over the use of the terms "Academy Award" and the more popular "Oscar". When consulting as usual about the booklet notes with my Board of Directors for Bing Matters (consisting of my wife, Laura, my daughter, Joanne—who serves as editor—and our esteemed cat, Andromeda), Laura came up with what we all thought was the perfect title for the CD: "BING SINGS THE OSCARS". Just right to catch the eye of prospective buyers in the music stores. Universal liked the title as well, and even provided me with an advance proof copy of the booklet featuring Laura's clever title. However, when Universal asked the Academy for approval to use its trademarks in the booklet, they refused. Instead, the Academy sent Universal a letter filled with legalistic jargon that specifically objected to our proposed CD title, along with several other nitpicks about the text. The letter stated " ... The Academy cannot give its blessing to any use of the (trademark) OSCARS in the title —especially in such a fanciful and non-descriptive manner. The (proposed) subtitle "ACADEMY AWARD Winners and Nominees 1934-1960" is not per se objectionable ... "

Not wishing to get into a non-productive argument with know-it-all lawyers at the Academy, Universal changed the CD title to the much more mundane one you will find reviewed in Jim Reilly's article elsewhere in this issue of BING. I still think Laura's original title was exactly the right one, and I am pleased to say that you will find the original booklet cover reproduced here, so you can see what it should have looked like had the Academy not objected.

Also, to give everyone a complete report on what would have been my complete liner notes for the booklet, here is the section which I wrote on "True Love" which had to be deleted because the Capitol track was not available:

"TRUE LOVE" (1956)

High Society, MGM's Technicolor remake of 1941's **The Philadelphia Story,** was an unqualified success and one of the most popular movies of Bing Crosby's long career. With an all-star cast that included Frank Sinatra, Grace Kelly and Bing's jazz partner Louis Armstrong, **High Society** also benefitted from an excellent score by Cole Porter. For many, the highlights of the film were two clever duets by Bing, "Well Did You Evah?" with Frank Sinatra, and the now classic "Now You Has Jazz" with Louis Armstrong and his All-Stars. But the Oscar nomination went to Porter's nostalgic love ballad, "True Love", which Bing sang to Grace Kelly in the film, who joined in on a few lines of the reprised chorus. Their soundtrack recording of "True Love" was released as a single by Capitol and became a million-selling Gold Record. On Oscar night, however, the statuette was awarded instead to "Que, Sera, Sera" (Whatever Will Be, Will Be), another Doris Day hit from the Alfred Hitchcock film **The Man Who Knew Too Much.**

So that's the full story of "BING SINGS THE OSCARS", which didn't quite make it into the music stores as planned. Nevertheless, I hope ICC members will still enjoy the final, though slightly incomplete, results of my latest efforts to keep the best of Bing's Decca recordings available on compact disc for the general public. Trying to do the right thing by Bing isn't always possible, but I will continue to do my best.

A NEW BING CROSBY DISCOGRAPHY

The most frequent request that I receive from other ICC members is for an up-to-date discography of Bing's commercial recordings. Despite the many discographies that have been published over the years, none are currently in print. Therefore, for the past year, I have been working with fellow American collectors Ken Gray of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Howard Levine of Coral Springs, Florida, to compile a new Crosby discography, which should be available sometime next year—just as soon as our fellow conspirator, one Jim Reilly of Portsmouth, England—is able to computerize all of the data and prepare it for printing in booklet form. Provisionally entitled "BING CROSBY'S COMMERCIAL RECORDINGS: FROM 78s TO CDs", this forthcoming discography will contain the following information, in tabular form, about each recording:

1 - Date of Recording
2 - Song Title
3 - Song Writers
4 - Orchestral and Vocal Accompanists
5 - Matrix and Take Number
6 - Original Commercial Release
7 - Compact Disc Release (As Appropriate)

This tabular material will be supplemented by photographs and narrative descriptions of some of Bing's most famous recordings, as well as identification lists and indexes for ready reference. All of Bing's known commercially-released studio recordings will be included, plus other non-studio material that also was released commercially. We believe that this new discography will be a handy reference guide that all Crosby collectors will find both useful and informative, especially in identifying which songs are currently available on compact disc.

I will provide further details in the Winter issue of BING, when we hope to be able to announce a specific publication date for some time during the year 2001.

BING AND SATCHMO AT LINCOLN CENTER

Lincoln Center is New York City's major entertainment complex that includes the Metropolitan Opera House, the New York State Theater, the Julliard School of Music, and the Avery Fisher Concert Hall among its many buildings located in Midtown Manhattan near Central Park. One of the more popular programs presented there over the past decade is entitled "Jazz At Lincoln Center", which this year is celebrating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Louis Armstrong through live concerts, film programs, special lectures and other presentations.

On May 23, the "Jazz At Lincoln Center" series JAZZ TALK featured ICC member Gary Giddins, music critic of New York's VILLAGE VOICE, in an evening discussion entitled "Bing & Pops: Remembrances of Bing Crosby and Louis Armstrong". Advance publicity described Gary's lecture as follows: "The quintessential crooner and

movie star Bing Crosby and legendary jazz trumpeter, singer and bandleader Louis Armstrong were two of the most internationally renowned entertainers of the 20th century. Music critic Gary Giddins has written biographies of both superstars. He will compare and contrast their lives, their friendship, and their music in this unique program, a preview of the upcoming Armstrong Centennial."

Having alerted other ICC members about Gary's forthcoming lecture, my wife, Laura, and I took a mid-morning train from Washington, D.C., to New York's Pennsylvania Station (yes, the starting point for Glenn Miller's immortal 1941 trip to Chattanooga), for an overnight stay at the Midtown Holiday Inn, which is only a few blocks from Lincoln Center.

Before Gary's lecture that evening, Laura and I were joined by several other ICC members from the New York area, including Jay Diamond (of New York radio fame, whose special Crosby broadcast I reviewed in the Spring issue of BING), Roger Schore (who earlier had alerted me to a forthcoming Bing Crosby Conference at New York's Hofstra University) and Charlie Van Riper and his wife from Whiting, New Jersey (who shared with us several prized mementos of Bing's 1976 concerts at New York's Uris Theater).

After getting acquainted with one another, we proceeded in two taxis to Lincoln Center for Gary's lecture. And it was a good thing that Roger Schore had joined us, as otherwise we would have had a difficult time finding the lecture hall among Lincoln Center's complicated group of buildings. Upon arriving, we met other ICC members among the audience, including Harvey Sheirr of New York City, David Robbins from Hauppauge and Ted Schoemburg from Beacon, New York. All in all, the ICC was quite well represented.

THE LECTURE BY GARY GIDDINS

Gary's lecture, of course, was the highlight of the evening. Well attended (some 100 by my quick count), by a responsive and enthusiastic audience, Gary spoke informally from limited notes, and utilized both video clips and selected recordings to illustrate his main points. As the author of a best-selling book (and related video) about Louis Armstrong, and his soon-to-be published magnum opus on Bing, Gary Giddins has unsurpassed and well-documented knowledge of both musical giants, and of the almost half-century relationship between them which so enriched the American popular and jazz music scene.

Gary Giddins first traced the different, but similar, origins of Bing and Louis, and their early exposure to music, pointing out that while Louis was raised in relative poverty in New Orleans, Bing grew up in a poor working class family in Spokane, half a continent away. They each came to music without predetermined prejudices. While Louis was exposed to the music of the streets of New Orleans, Bing haunted the record shops of Spokane. But they both developed an equal love for the popular music of their day, which was rapidly becoming the "hot jazz" of the Roaring Twenties. Although growing up so far apart, Bing and Louis met early in their respective careers and formed an instant mutual admiration society that continued throughout their lifetimes. Gary stated that Mildred Bailey first mentioned Satchmo to Bing in 1925, when Bing and Al Rinker came to Los Angeles in search of a career in show business, and encouraged Bing to get to know Louis. Which Bing did in late 1926, when he and Al first reached Chicago with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra. Louis already was a growing star with King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band, and Bing and Louis formed a firm after-hours friendship at that time. Louis Armstrong was then 26 years old, while Bing had not yet turned 24. Both were young, extremely talented, and unique in their separate, but complimentary ways.

Gary Giddins also emphasized the cross-over between their respective styles of singing, stating that Bing's earliest jazz inflections owed much to Satchmo's vocalizing, even before Louis began making vocal, rather than instrumental, recordings! In return, Gary stated that Bing had encouraged Louis to sing popular songs, which he soon began to do, including several of Bing's own hits among his earliest recordings.

Using several television clips as illustrations, Gary clearly demonstrated to the audience the obvious pleasure that Bing and Louis displayed in working with each other, first on radio, then in films, and later on television. Clips shown included "Basin Street Blues", "Everybody Loves My Baby" and "Lazy Bones", each displaying Bing and Louis at their relaxed best when performing together. Gary also ran clips of Bing's versions of "Please" (with guitarist Eddie Lang) and "Dinah" from **The Big Broadcast** (1932), as well as his duet on "Love and Learn" with Jackie Fontaine from **The Country Girl** (1954), as examples of Satchmo's influences on Bing's singing style.

Gary utilized recorded examples (Bing's recording of "Mary" with Paul Whiteman, and Armstrong's version of "I'm Confessin'") to demonstrate another similarity between their vocal mannerisms, what Gary described as the use of the "upper mordent" in singing, a similarity that he had found in both Black and Irish music. Gary added that Bing had brought this style back into the popular music of the 30's and 40's through his recordings. My own translation of "upper mordent" is "grace note", or "trill", but if you listen closely to many of Bing's recordings you certainly will understand the point that Gary was making.

For me, the most interesting part of the evening's lecture were Gary's comments about Bing's famous television show for EDSEL back in 1957. Gary said that, as frequently was the case, Bing had wanted Louis to be on the show with him, but that Ford executives (the sponsor) tried to keep Armstrong off the program because of public statements that Louis had recently made attacking racism during a school integration crisis in Arkansas that had attracted national attention. In typical fashion, Bing told the network: "No Armstrong, no Crosby"! And, of course, Bing had his way. In fact, the EDSEL program not only gave Louis top billing but featured the by-then famous "Now You Has Jazz" sequence from **High Society** as its opening number. Bing also saw to it that Louis had several other featured spots during the program. For other revealing comments about the EDSEL show, see the section below about Rosemary Clooney's participation.

Gary Giddins closed his lecture with a "Hollywood Palace" clip from 1966 with Bing and Louis performing "Muskrat Ramble" and "Sing A Dixieland Song" in their familiar happy-go-lucky fashion, a fitting final tribute to two incomparable musicians who thoroughly enjoyed working with each other. It doesn't get much better than that.

After the last film clip, Gary Giddins answered a few questions from the audience, but as the scheduled hour had already been exceeded by an extra thirty minutes, unfortunately it was necessary to end his program, even though most of us in the audience would have been happy to stay longer. As a matter of fact, Gary had a number of other points that he would like to have made but had to omit. I know this for a fact, since Gary kindly gave me his notes after the lecture so that I could prepare this write-up for BING.

ROSEMARY CLOONEY

When the ICC contingent first entered the lecture hall at Lincoln Center, we were pleasantly surprised to find Rosemary Clooney and her husband Dante, sitting in the front row. Laura and I had met Rosemary and Dante in Richmond, Virginia in 1993, when she was preparing her sold-out tribute to Bing at New York's Carnegie Hall (see BING #106 for my review of that historic evening). It was very nice to see both of them again, and Rosemary thanked me for her honorary membership in the ICC, and said that she always enjoyed reading our BING magazine, which I appreciated hearing.

During the lecture, Gary ran a film clip of an incredibly young-looking Rosemary (were we all that young once?) singing "Anything You Can Do" with Bing and Buddy Cole, which Gary said was from a radio rehearsal. Surprisingly, when Rosemary joined Gary at the podium for several comments about her own experiences working with Bing, she told the audience that she didn't remember the occasion when the film clip had been made!

Rosemary added a few personal recollections of the EDSEL show, particularly about Bing and Frank Sinatra. Recalling the song medley that the three of them sang during the program, Rosemary pointed out that the show was done live, and that Frank was either late to rehearsals, or didn't bother to come at all, which Bing definitely did not appreciate. Furthermore, during their medley, there was a tricky key change at one point that Frank completely flubbed on camera. Rosemary said the television audience thought Frank's obvious gaff was funny, but Bing was extremely annoyed, and she wasn't too pleased either!

Picking up on Rosemary's remarks about Frank Sinatra, Gary Giddins ran a television clip of a duet between Frank and Louis singing "Birth of the Blues". Gary pointed out that while Bing loved to sing duets, and probably recorded more duets than any other major popular singer, Frank did not, and frequently was terrible when singing live with other performers. In the clip, Frank started out in his "ultra-cool" style on the verse, with a cigarette ostentatiously in hand, only to become completely nonplussed when Louis took over the chorus. At this point, Frank began to exhibit a weird sort of shuffling shake (which was almost completely off -the-beat), while a rather strange, forced smile replaced his previously "cool" demeanor and he completely forgot his cigarette. Gary's point was that, while Frank Sinatra was many things, he was not the kind of relaxed jazz vocalist that Bing was, and that Frank was obviously out of his league in trying to keep up with Louis Armstrong. Old Satchelmouth was a far cry from the Rat Pack, and Frank clearly knew it on that occasion.

"WHITE CHRISTMAS"

Just before leaving Gary's lecture, Rosemary Clooney told me that she had finished taping a special commentary about the film **White Christmas,** which she made with Bing in 1954. Universal, which now owns the Paramount Pictures film library, will be reissuing a remastered edition of **White Christmas** on DVD this coming holiday season, and will include Rosemary's comments as part of the DVD release.

HARRY CROSBY

After the lecture ended, a member of the audience went up to Gary Giddins, thanked him, and introduced himself as Bing's son, Harry. He had entered and sat quietly throughout the evening, and did not identify himself to anyone else before leaving. Nevertheless, it was reassuring to learn that a member of Bing's family had been in attendance. And so, an excellent tribute to Bing and Louis Armstrong came to an end much too soon. I would like to extend my congratulations to Gary Giddins for his outstanding presentation, and we can only hope that there might be other such occasions in the future.

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins June 15, 2000

(Editor: A magnificent write-up by Wig and what a marvellous evening at the Lincoln Center! Member David Robbins also contributed a review of the evening to the Bing Crosby Internet Museum and we have great pleasure in reproducing this below.)

Gary Giddins at the Lincoln Center

I attended Gary Giddins JAZZ TALK, at Lincoln Center on Tuesday, May 23: "Bing & Pops: Remembrances of Bing Crosby and Louis Armstrong." It was an extraordinary teaser to Mr. Giddins' first Volume about Bing that is due in November (according to the Program). I was flying. The choice of film clips, the set ups for same, the energy of the crowd were just perfect. It was a perfect night.

Rosemary Clooney made a surprise, unbilled appearance and was just absolutely charming; telling stories about Bing and Frank Sinatra. I overheard someone say that Bing's son, Harry, was in the crowd but had kept a low profile. Wig and Laura Wiggins were on hand. Wig announced the event in his Newsletter to ICC members and thus had something to do with the near sold out attendance. There were a lot of seniors in the crowd but the joint was hopping. The highlight for me was a clip from an early television Special where Poppa Bing and Pops sing a perfectly syncopated dialect of rhythm and blues that they both spoke fluently. You just don't see that much talent and charisma all in one place all that often over the course of a lifetime. The crowd went wild. In

another wonderful clip, Louis Armstrong completely unnerves Frank Sinatra who (for possibly the only time in his life) loses his cool.

If Gary Giddins comes to your neighborhood, don't miss him. I've read all the Crosby books, heard the stories, seen the television biographies, but everything Mr. Giddins shared with us was new to me. This man has been doing his homework. He was among friends, passionate Crosby fans who could appreciate a presentation by one of their own. When I went to shake Mr. Giddins' hand at the end to congratulate him on his outstanding presentation, I couldn't help adding, "Now go home and get back to work." He gave me the same patient look he must give all Crosby fans. We want to make his book a Best Seller but I imagine we can be a pain.

David Robbins

THE CROSBY: June 1 - June 4

The 15th. annual Crosby golf tournament organised by Kathryn Crosby took place in June at the Bermuda Run Country Club, near Winston-Salem, North Carolina. For those on the Net, details can be obtained at http://www.thecrosby.org/index.html George O'Reilly was there and had a wonderful time! The Daily Telegraph carried an interview with Kathryn arising from the tournament and we are reproducing this below with acknowledgments to that paper.

What a swell party she is

Bing Crosby's widow, Kathryn, tells Michael Shelden about life together, his love affairs and family tragedy

It is 23 years since Bing Crosby suffered a fatal heart attack after a round of golf in Spain, but his widow still speaks of him as though he has just left the room.

"Oh, you know the wonderful thing about Bing's voice?" she says excitedly. "In his films, if you listen closely, you'll see there's no difference between his singing voice and his speaking voice. That lilt is always there. In a way, whenever he opens his mouth, he's always singing for you. That's rare, you know."

Indeed it is, which is why it's not surprising that almost half a billion copies of Bing's recordings have been sold worldwide, and that films such as **Holiday Inn** and **Going My Way** are still perennial favourites. Admired by Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley, Bing was the first music superstar, a man equally at home in front of the camera and the microphone.

And on this sunny June morning, at a luxurious country club deep in the forests of North Carolina, pictures of the crooner who gave us 'Swinging on a Star', 'I'll Be Seeing You' and 'Pennies from Heaven' are everywhere. For this is the annual Crosby Golf Tournament, and his widow, Kathryn, has turned the place into an enormous shrine. Wherever you turn, there are posters, paintings, commemorative mugs, books and T-shirts sporting the singer's image. After a while, you half expect to turn a corner and find the old boy practising his golf swing in a shady spot.

In the Thirties, near the peak of his stardom, Bing began the tradition of hosting a golf tournament for charity, with his celebrity pals playing alongside professional golfers. The event always attracted huge audiences and was a highlight of the social season in the days when it was based at Pebble Beach Country Club in California.

After Bing's death, its popularity inevitably declined, but Kathryn Crosby has been working tirelessly to make it a major event in its new home outside Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

"We have held the tournament down here for the past 15 years and have raised about $20 million for charity. Bing would be proud, don't you think?"

Well, yes and no. The money is impressive but what the tournament lacks these days is star power. Most of the celebrity golfers who make the journey to this obscure part of America are figures from the world of American sport - retired footballers and baseball players. The few names that would be recognisable in Britain seem rather odd choices for an event of this kind, as evidenced by the presence of such strange pairs as the fashion designer Oleg Cassini and the veteran movie star Elke Sommer.

But if Kathryn is disappointed at the lack of glittering names, she doesn't show it. Irrepressibly cheerful, and looking rather jaunty in a straw hat and plaid jacket, she glides over the grounds shaking hands and giving royal nods of approval to the hundreds of workers preparing for the big event.

Two or three assistants always seem to be trailing in her wake, each ready to scurry off at a moment's notice on some errand. If she holds up her hand and asks for a golf club or an iced drink, one of her people will produce the item in seconds.

Meanwhile, in all directions, I notice the continual movements of a small army of uniformed security guards, some of whom are using golf carts to prowl the grounds and car park. It's the sort of protection that makes one think that the tournament's top prize of $1 million might be piled in cash somewhere on the grounds.

Kathryn's noble bearing and eager court of attendants, guards and fans are not just the results of her status as the reigning queen of the tournament. When Bing died, he was one of the richest men in Hollywood and his widow can afford to live like a queen year-round. She has a beautiful house worth millions outside San Francisco, as well as a second home in Nevada, and yet seems to travel constantly, in recent years wandering as far away as Siberia.

Royalties from Bing's records are only a small part of her wealth. Over the years, the Crosby empire has included vast acres of property in California and Mexico, dozens of race horses, an orange juice company which is now a subsidiary of Coca-Cola, oil wells and various entertainment production companies.

When I ask the smiling widow whether the Crosby fortune is still growing, she looks at me with astonishment. Her eyes seem to suggest that old Bing did very well by her in the money department.

"Bob Hope is the one who really did well from buying property in California. He bought so much that Bing and I used to joke that the song 'This Land is Your Land' was

written for Bob."

With a coy smile she adds: "But, yes, Bob did leave a little of the land for Bing to own."

It was Kathryn's good fortune to meet Bing when her principal assets were youth and beauty. Now 65, she was an 18-year-old starlet from Texas under contract at Paramount Studios when she caught Bing's eye in 1953. He was 50 at the time, the father of four grown boys - three of them older than she - and had lost his first wife, Dixie, to cancer the previous year.

"Bing was devastated by Dixie's death. She was very ill for five years and he did everything he could to care for her. He went to work at the studio and then he came home, and that was it for much of the time. After her death, he was very lonely."

And then, one day at the studio, he spotted young Kathryn rushing past his dressing room with a tennis racket in one hand and some spare petticoats over her shoulder. She had made a screen test with William Holden and was being groomed for a slow rise to stardom through various minor parts. But one of her few claims to fame at the time was her title as Rodeo Queen in a Houston beauty contest.

"He took one look at me and said in that mellow voice of his: 'What's your hurry, Tex?' That voice nailed me right away. I stopped in my tracks, looked around and saw those eyes and then I really was nailed. He said, 'Come on in and sit a spell,' and I couldn't resist."

So it was love at first sight?

"Maybe not love, but let's say, comfortable at first sight. Love took a little while."

Unlike many of the women who wanted to know Bing better, Kathryn was not a diehard Crosby fan. In fact, she knew very little about him.

"Growing up in a little town in Texas, I didn't have the chance to see many of his movies and we didn't have the fan magazines that would have given me all the gossip on his life and career. To be honest, I wasn't a fan of his at all, simply because I knew so little about him. So he won me over on the strength of his charm alone. Which was pretty strong stuff, anyway."

It was four years before Bing found time to marry his Texan beauty queen. Film work and recording commitments kept them apart, but so did the singer's restless travels on hunting, fishing and golfing expeditions. As Kathryn soon discovered, he had a habit of suddenly disappearing for weeks at time. Then, out of the blue, she would get a letter from him explaining that he was with his pals at some hunting lodge or fishing resort and would see her when he returned to Hollywood.

But it was not merely outdoor games that interested Bing. During the filming of **The Country Girl,** he took a fancy to co-star Grace Kelly and, for a while, it seemed that she was the centre of his romantic life. Then the young actress Inger Stevens also became involved in a passionate relationship with Bing, which ended stormily and contributed to a long depression that resulted in her suicide several years later.

Kathryn kept her cool in this troubled period and waited patiently for Bing to decide which of his loves would result in marriage. In the meantime, she kept busy at the studio, making a series of inconsequential pictures with such stars as Audie Murphy and Jack Lemmon.

"I loved working with Jack and the late Ernie Kovacs, both of whom were terribly fun to be with. But poor Audie Murphy, the war hero turned movie star, was a difficult character, and I spent a lot of my time digging holes in the ground next to him."

Digging holes?

"Yes, he was so short that his female co-stars had to stand in a hole when they were beside him on the set. We would literally dig a spot in the ground and stand in it until he looked tall enough to satisfy his vanity. He was a fearless soldier in the war, but he couldn't stand having women tower over him."

The high point of her career was a starring part in the Technicolor extravaganza **The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad.** But just as she was beginning to find success, Bing decided that it was time to settle down and start another family. He and Kathryn married in 1957 and began having children right away. Harry was born in 1958, Mary Frances the next year and Nathaniel in 1961.

Bing moved the family from Hollywood to San Francisco and made his home there for the rest of his life. He liked being close to Pebble Beach, near Carmel, but also seems to have wanted Kathryn out of Hollywood.

Was he jealous of her career?

"I wouldn't say that, but it was hard to be a movie actress and live in San Francisco. So my acting career was put on hold and my life as a wife and mother became my new focus. But I was never going to settle for just staying at home, so I studied medicine and became a nurse. I was also a teacher. And, whenever possible, I would take acting jobs."

Though mellow on the outside, Crosby was not the easiest person to live with. He was almost painfully reserved at times, and always had trouble expressing his feelings in anything but song. His oldest son from his first marriage, Gary, was constantly at war with Bing and later attacked him mercilessly in print as a cold and sadistic parent.

Kathryn doesn't deny that Bing could be difficult, but she insists that he was kind to her and a good father to her children, all three of whom seem far better adjusted to life than Dixie's four boys. Harry works on Wall Street, Nathaniel is a celebrated golfer and Mary Frances enjoyed a career as a television actress. She is perhaps best known for her part as the character who shot J R Ewing in the series **Dallas.**

Gary's problem, Kathryn suggests, was a combination of envy and alcoholic rage.

"Gary drank a lot and wasted a lot of the opportunities that Bing gave him. I think, as the eldest, he would have been happier as the only child receiving all his father's attention. At least, that's what he wanted, and he resented the fact that other people were involved in Bing's life.

"He responded by spreading stories about his father, and then wondered why Bing's friends turned against him. I tried to be a friend, but he made it impossible."

Did you feel betrayed?

"Oh, yes, almost on a daily basis."

Gary died, embittered and angry as ever, in 1995, not long after the suicides of his brothers Dennis and Lindsay. Bing himself died in better circumstances. At 74, he was rich, famous and beloved by his millions of fans and his adoring second family. One bright sunny day in October,

1977, he played a full round of golf at a course in Spain and finished with a winning score. He was happy and was delighted to be enjoying his favourite pastime. He turned to his golfing buddies, told them, "That was a great game fellas", and then fell down and died of a heart attack.

"You can't really say that any death is good, but Bing certainly died in the way he would have wanted. It was the perfect exit."

Kathryn, who was at home in San Francisco at the time, had the body flown back for burial next to Dixie's grave in California. The funeral service was a small one for a few intimate friends, and was held at dawn ("Where the blue of the night meets the gold of the day") His old friend and fellow show business magnate Bob Hope was among the mourners.

"Bob said that it was the only time in his life that he had cancelled a show. He had a performance to do in New York, but he wouldn't let anything stop him from being at the funeral. He and Bing were true friends, not just actors pretending to be friends on screen."

In the many years since her husband's death, Kathryn has worked hard to protect his estate and to continue his charity work. She misses him and isn't afraid to show it.

With tears coming to her eyes, she says: "You know what I found especially moving after Bing's funeral? It was a cartoon tribute to him from a magazine that someone sent me. It showed him happily enjoying life in the next world. And you know what he was doing? He was swinging on a star."

(Editor: During my conversations with Kathryn Crosby last year, I stressed that we all had to work hard to ensure that Bing's image does not fade as people who grew up to the sound of his voice pass away. An echo of my thoughts about Bing's image fading appeared in a superb article in a newish magazine called Jazz Review which we reproduce with grateful acknowledgements to the magazine.)

Bing Crosby the young groaner

The legacy of the first jazz crooner and his immortal voice.
By Mike Fish

For a man who was once regarded as one of the most popular people on earth, Bing Crosby's decline as a showbiz icon has been surprisingly steady. Like Al Jolson or Benny Goodman, Crosby has been a passive victim of changing tastes. Since his death in 1977, the greatest hitmaker of the 30s and 40s has been pushed aside by post-modern opinion. As audiences have become ever more knowing, and aspire to be increasingly sophisticated, the homespun quality which was once Crosby's ace has been persistently trumped by more metropolitan styles. At one time, there was simply no contest for the title of singer of the century: even after Presley, there was the lingering feeling that Crosby had been there at the start of modern popular music, and had endured for so long, that it would be disrespectful to put anyone above him. Now, though, his star has been so thoroughly eclipsed by Frank Sinatra in particular that he has been relegated to a rather vague legend status.

Sinatra couldn't have happened without Crosby leading the way, but that wasn't the point: he was an advance on what Crosby represented, and with his more worldly, arrogant demeanour, the younger singer became the modern post-war man that Crosby could never be. By the time of the LP era, when Sinatra began to fashion his invulnerable mature persona, Crosby already seemed like a paternal uncle. Though he didn't actually turn 50 until 1953, Bing suddenly looked like an old man next to the idols of the bobbysoxers.

Some fate for the hot young singer of twenty years or so earlier, but such is the destiny of all pioneers.

Crosby's amiability, which cemented him with his popular audience, became his undoing with posterity as a whole. He left a gigantic legacy of recordings, something like 60 films, a whole era of radio broadcasting - much of which survives in transcription form - and an eternal seasonal niche thanks to 'White Christmas". But take out the huge percentage of sentimental corn, repetitive novelty and plain indifferent material, and Crosby's legacy comes to seem far less than the sum of its parts. Unlike, say, Perry Como (whom Crosby himself once referred to as 'the man who invented casual') Bing seemed stuck with his homely gentility. Where Como excelled at making an otherwise lachrymose style into something almost breezily romantic, Crosby eventually settled into his songs the way feet settle into slippers.

It was partly due to his own preferences. His heart was always in a kind of music that was not only pre-bebop ('Bop eludes me completely,' he once said) but pre-swing. Dixieland was his natural home. One can't imagine him fronting the Artie Shaw Orchestra any more than the

Dizzy Gillespie Big Band. Although most of his Decca sessions of the 30s and 40s were backed by the likes of John Scott Trotter and his handsome if pedestrian arrangements, when he got a chance to work with a small group, it was with Matty Matlock or a Condon group or the Woody Herman Woodchoppers. His favourite collaborators were all performers who'd grown out of the jazz and pop of the 20s: Connie Boswell, Jack Teagarden and, above all others, Louis Armstrong. His mutual admiration society with Armstrong is well-known, and it's a little strange that, as Armstrong's star has continued to ascend, even long after his passing, Crosby's is in a slow, stately decline.

Because Bing was the kind of artist who should garner tribute albums and nods of respect as readily as Holiday, Fitzgerald or, indeed, Sinatra. If he hadn't come along and synthesised a new vocal style, language even, when he did, someone else would have done it, for sure. But it was Bing Crosby who took the black jazz rhythms of the 20s and partnered them with a light, casual, confiding manner that changed popular singing forever. His was not jazz singing as such: that was the preserve, then, of Armstrong, who himself made Crosby's freedoms possible. One can get caught up in the semantics of all this, but Bing was a singer steeped in jazz who shaped a way forward for singers who had previously been directed by Jolson and his vaudeville contemporaries. The now-ancient delivery of Jolson and his ilk was still contemporary enough to be a profound influence on Crosby, too, and it was something he never really wanted to lose, either: listen to the marvellous JSP CD of radio broadcasts by Bing and Jimmy Durante (1), someone else who loved jazz but was an old-time hoofer of the first order. Bing surely coveted this situation as much as he liked to perform with a Dixieland band. Yet Crosby's blend of intimacy, swing and a nuanced refinement of tone was something that no other singer of his time - roughly, the period covered by his first recordings in 1926 up to his movie debut in 1932 - could have handled.

When he started recording as one of Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys in 1927, Crosby was no more than one of a legion of honest, capable band singers, who supplied what was usually described as "vocal refrain' on the labels of the 78s that issued the music of the day. But it was a fortuitous environment for Crosby to find himself in, including Bix Beiderbecke and guitarist Eddie Lang, who continued to appear on Crosby records long after the singer had gone solo.

When Whiteman started featuring Crosby as an individual voice, it was obvious that the young fellow had the makings of a solo act. But singers rarely cast out on their own in those days. It wasn't until the beginning of the 1930s that he began to work for himself, and his (American) Brunswick sides in this period are among the most remarkable he ever made.

In many ways, the best of these tracks count as some of the neglected masterpieces of jazz singing. Because Crosby was already recording a quota of comparative fluff, his finest work of the period is often overlooked, but the truth is that the best of his early records should stand - in the jazz-singing scheme of things - with the best of Holiday and Wilson, Ella and Nelson, and Sarah and Clifford. A handful of his most 'uncompromised' tracks are somewhat recognized as the classics they are. 'Sweet Georgia Brown' (2), with the Isham Jones Orchestra, is a flat-out masterpiece, climaxing with a half-chorus of scat and a quickfire ending that still provokes shouts of approval from listeners hearing it for the first time; and 'Some Of These Days' (3), with a contingent from the Whiteman Orchestra including Lang and Frankie Trumbauer, is a show of vocal virtuosity that would surely have been far beyond any other white singer of the day. Just as telling in their way, though, are the ballads and setpieces which were the bread-and-butter of singers of the time: instead of bawling his way through them, or dwelling on mere mannerism, Crosby muses on lyrics, lights them up or subdues them, does whatever he thinks is right - and nearly always it's a surprising twist on what one might have expected from the time. 'Brother, Can You Spare A Dime?' (2) could have been insufferably melodramatic, but some of the lines he almost turns away from, as if sensing that he dare not overcook them. The verse to 'Let's Put Out The Lights (And Go To Sleep)' (2) is one of the best examples of his developing conversational method. He almost talks some of the lines, timing their delivery with the kind of conspiratorial finesse which would have the listener smiling along in agreement. The intro and verse to 'Love Thy Neighbour' (2) suggests a ponderous morality lesson in the offing, but the jauntiness of the chorus entirely subverts that.

Bing and Eddie Lang

For those who only know the deeper-voiced, less taut Crosby of his next period, these tricks will as a whole be a bit of a surprise. In some ways, it's a transitional phase for his voice. He still has the rather proper, clarion delivery of key lines which suggests the past rather than the future, and the easeful baritone which would be the familiar Crosby stance has yet to be consistently there. Instead, there's the insouciant young jazz voice working alongside

the mature master trying to assert himself. One way or another, this mild conflict would go on until Crosby signed to Decca in 1934, and began his years with A & R chief Jack Kapp.

As Mitch Miller did to Sinatra, so Kapp did to Crosby: inflicting on him countless songs of little worth and sometimes even less suitability. The difference was that Crosby, plain-speaking everyman that he was, managed to create warmth and even enlightenment out of so many of Kapp's follies. Decca's backings mellowed from the scratchy strings of the Brunswick sides to the fuller, more legato settings of the middle 30s, and Crosby's mature period began to take shape. As the swing era got under way, his own records grew smoother, less energetic but more beguiling to an audience that wanted sweetness along with swing. Leafing through his discography of the period is sometimes bewildering, since so few of the songs seem recognizable, either as Crosby vehicles or anything else. What's happened to 'You're A Sweet Little Headache', 'Whistling in The Wildwood', "Let's Waltz For Old Times' Sake" or 'Dear Old Girl'?

They're in the limbo of ephemerality which Jack Kapp created for Bing, and the miracle was that he still managed to get so much out of so many of them. If Sinatra's contempt for some of the stuff he was saddled with in the 40s is obvious from the start, Crosby scarcely if ever looks down on his material. He recorded a whole raft of Hawaiian songs and cowboy tunes along with the straight-ahead ballads, and he seems to address them all with the care and benign accomplishment that one always thinks of when Crosby's name comes to mind. 'Sweet Leilani' (4), for instance, with Lani McIntyre's Hawaiians, is as tender and good-natured a performance as he grants to any of the better songs he recorded.

That, though, points up the issue of Crosby's commitment. Bing seems bedevilled by his very consistency. When he does get great songs or perfect situations, he obviously enjoys them yet never suggests that he's saving the best of himself for such a moment. Take the session of 3 December 1940: two cowboy songs, one forgettable piece and the lovely mid-tempo Van Heusen - Burke song 'It's Always You'. You'd hardly think there was any difference between them from the calm way he strolls through the date. On some of his jazziest dates, he almost seems ready to return to being the singer of the 'vocal refrain' days, so keen is he to let the others get their chops in. The date with Eddie Condon of January 1946 (5) is as much about Wild Bill Davison and Bud Freeman as it is about Crosby. He lets Joe Sullivan have a full chorus on 'Moonburn' (5), but here at least he's all over the record and the lyric alike. There's a sense of fun about Crosby in these situations which is almost akin to Fats Waller's cheerful demolitions.

Perhaps that's how Crosby really saw the essence of jazz, as a good-humoured, fun thing. If he didn't trivialize it, he could hardly get hold of the kind of blues delivery which was Armstrong's raison d'étre, and he didn't try to. His celebrated version of 'St. Louis Blues' with the 1932 Ellington orchestra (4) is memorably intense and committed, but it's a departure that he never really returned to, more like an essay on the style than Bing singin' the blues.

MADE IN ENGLAND
"Magic Notes"
TRADE MARK
Columbia
Copyright Patented Record. Not to be sold below price fixed by Patentees. All rights of the manufacturer and of the Owner of the recorded work reserved. Unauthorised public performance, broadcasting and copying of this record prohibited.
BX 11263
SPEED 78
D.X. 898
ST. LOUIS BLUES
("Concert Version")
(Handy)
BING CROSBY with
DUKE ELLINGTON and
HIS ORCHESTRA
FRANCIS, DAY
M.C.A.
COLUMBIA GRAPHOPHONE CO. LTD.

Every time he had some kind of reunion with Armstrong - usually, alas, on radio or TV rather than on record - Crosby seemed rejuvenated. Their wonderful setpiece from **High Society,** 'Now You Has Jazz", might be a signature theme for their partnership. That was in 1956, when Sinatra's star was exceptionally high and at least one generation of crooners had supplanted The Old Groaner, as Crosby sometimes called himself. Not that his days of selling records were over. He had a huge hit with 'Around The World' in 1957 and Irving Berlin's Christmas chestnut kept him in people's minds at least once a year. What's disappointing is that Crosby didn't seem much interested in LP projects. Taken a track at a time, his numerous singles and individual album tracks from the late 50s actually represent some of his most cultivated and persuasive singing.

The album which Crosby admirers always point to from this period is Bing With A Beat (6), made for RCA in 1957. Paired with a Dixieland small group led by Bob Scobey, Crosby relished a sort of back-to-the-roots exercise which had him singing such back numbers as 'Last Night On The Back Porch' along with Scobey's Frisco Jazz Band. This could have been merely a superannuated Dixieland session, but the presence of Bing's old friend Matty Matlock as arranger placed a strong guiding hand on the tiller, and the whole record is full of unobtrusive but telling detail. The balance between band and singer is exactly right, and if Crosby dominates as he should, the pleasure each side takes in the other's work elicits the friendliest and most productive feeling out of the session.

This was in many respects one of Crosby's greatest periods, as far as the quality of his voice - rich, ripe and still unstrained - and the commitment to his singing were concerned. The albums now reissued as a double-header, Some Fine Old Chestnuts and New Tricks (7), with Buddy Cole's trio in discreet support, have a chamberish quality which was scarcely contemporary then or now, yet enabled Crosby to sing the lyrics with no encumbrances, and on a Dixieland staple like 'Chinatown, My Chinatown' (despite the ridiculous chopstick vibes) he breezes through the tune, seemingly carefree. By this point, he knew the music he sang so well that it was second nature to a great pro: the dedication of 25 years earlier was displaced by an assurance that probably came out sounding like indolence a lot of the time. But on a

terrific track like the unpromising 'She Is The Sunshine Of Virginia' (8), backed by the Les Brown band, Crosby almost soars through it.

There were still many records to come, but the end of the Fifties was effectively the end of Bing's significant career. Once pop and The Beatles took a serious grip, Crosby was reduced to guest-star status, a role he amiably filled, right up to his "Little Drummer Boy' duet with David Bowie. When he died in 1977, his legacy seemed immortal, yet much of it seems to have faded.

Symptomatic of that is how poorly represented he is on CD at present. It would be a pretty enormous undertaking to issue a complete edition, but MCA, who own most of his 1934-60 material, have shown little enthusiasm for anything other than the occasional compilation. The specialist label Jonzo embarked on a chronological edition in the late 70s on LP, but it didn't get much further than Volume 12 - which just about reached the 1930s! RCA have shown no inclination to put out the likes of Bing With A Beat or his collaborations with Rosemary Clooney, and Columbia's handling of the early US Brunswick sides has been haphazard. At a time when almost every note Sinatra breathed is on CD, Crosby's neglect seems pitiful.

He deserves his comeback. Just as more than one generation might remember Louis Armstrong only for "Hello Dolly" and "What A Wonderful World", so Crosby might now be thought of as little more than the balladeer of 'White Christmas' and the Road films with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour. Even a cursory trawl through just a cross-section of his records suggests the measure of his greatness but not always the matter of it. Crosby the artist would always defer to the casual, pipe-smoking, joshing Bing. Perhaps it's time to separate the singer from his benign outline and restore the pioneer jazz vocalist and his gift to generations of performers. Some may then realize that even today, when a lot of people sing, they're singing Bing.

Listening Notes
(1) Start Off Each Day With A Song JSP CD 701
(2) 16 Most Requested Songs Columbia CK 48974
(3) The Best Of Bing Hallmark 390402
(4) Bing Crosby And Friends ASV AJA 5147
(5) Bing Crosby And Some Jazz Friends MCA GRP 16032
(6) Bing With A Beat RCA LPM-1473
(7) Some Fine Old Chestnuts/ New Tricks MCA MCLD19377
(8) More Memories MCA MCLD 19387

(Editor: 'Jazz Review' is published by Direct Music Ltd., 89 Giles St., Edinburgh EH6 6BZ. Price £3. Don't delay - get a copy of this great article (plus the cover photo of Bing) whilst it is still available! Ask for the November 1999 issue. Pity the author didn't know about the Jonzo CDs! Another article along a similar theme appeared in the Cincinnati Post in June and again it makes good reading.)

Comparing Crosby, Sinatra

Column by Nick Clooney

William Mayer of Cincinnati opened up an interesting arena for debate. 'I couldn't believe that Time magazine in their article on entertainers of the century glorified Frank Sinatra and completely omitted Bing Crosby. ... (Bing) seems to be slighted in so many polls and articles. ... Would like your opinion."

There is no doubt Mr. Crosby was largely ignored in all the 'best of the century" pieces I have read. Part of the problem was, in show business terms, timing. Bing had the poor judgment to die in the 1970s, while Frank waited until the last minute to make his exit. The most recent experience always looms infinitely larger than any from the distant past. It's human nature.

Since just about any designation of 'best" in the arts or entertainment has to be subjective, it seems fair to point out two factors which might weigh against Mr. Crosby. First, his private life was private, period. Frank's, on the other hand, was often played out in public. Then there was The Book. Gary Crosby's scorching indictment of his father struck just as baby boomers were raising their own children and were much into child psychology, pop and otherwise. Denials by Gary's brothers and other family members and friends cut no ice with many. Gary had hit first and viciously. His deliberate damage to his father's reputation was, in my view, permanent. Frank's leaving of Nancy, his other high-profile marriages, his highly publicized problems with his own children, on the other hand, almost seemed to enhance his reputation.

Still, it is fair to take up Mr. Mayer's question and use the most nearly objective criteria we can find for a fair comparison. Records. Movies. Broadcasting. Personal appearances.

Personal appearances. Frank has a clear advantage. He staged many more concerts than Bing for a much longer time, did more of what he called "saloon" work and was with big bands on the road longer than Bing. Bing shied away from concerts until his last years, except for the scores of appearances for troops during World War II. This, however, is the last category in which Frank has the edge.

Records. From 1931 until 1965, Bing Crosby had an astonishing 39 No. 1 single records. That's nearly double the next artist. Moreover, in that same span he had an incredible 361 single records that appeared on contemporary hit lists. Included was the top-selling single of all time, "White Christmas." (The Elton John single honoring Princess Diana was a fund-raiser and so, in my opinion, should not be listed in this category.) Frank had a respectable seven No. 1 singles and a remarkable 170 releases on various hit charts from 1942 to 1980. He also had excellent album sales in postwar years, but this is not a good area for comparison, because album sales were not major factors in the 1930s and 1940s, Bing's biggest years. Similarly, Frank received 11 Grammys, but there were no Grammys in Bing's heyday.

Movies. However, there were movies and there were Oscars. Bing appeared in 70 feature films. He was three times nominated as best actor and he won the Oscar

once. He was on the Top Ten box office list an amazing 15 times and was No. 1 in the world five times. Frank made 50 features. He won the Oscar for best supporting actor once and was nominated for best actor. He made the Top Ten box-office list five times, never at No. 1.

Broadcasting. Both had radio shows. Bing's was regularly in the Top Ten for more than a decade. Frank's greatest success was as featured singer on "Your Hit Parade." Neither had sustained success in television.

One more thing should be noted. Bing Crosby virtually invented the solo pop singer, not associated with a band. Frank always generously acknowledged that fact. "Without Bing, there never could have been a Frank." Dean Martin, Frank's friend, was more specific. "Every one of us followed in Bing's footsteps."

Frank Sinatra was a great entertainer. The greatest of the century? Perhaps. On the other hand, Mr. Mayer, perhaps Bing just made it all look too easy. It wasn't, you know.

Nick Clooney writes for The Post every Monday, Wednesday and Friday.
Publication date: 06-05-00
Cincinnati Post
(Editor: And again on this theme...)

The Most Underrated Singer?

Each year in its May - June issue, the American Heritage magazine publishes its list of the most underrated and overrated in categories ranging from railroad stations to cars to drinks. This year it was Gary Giddins who was asked to nominate his choice of the most overrated and underrated singers. With grateful acknowledgments to American Heritage magazine. we reproduce Gary's piece here.

Singer - By Gary Giddins Most Overrated Singer:

Barbra Streisand. Many singers make my teeth ache, from Rudy Vallee to Britney Spears, but none is taken so seriously as the incomparably ersatz Barbra Streisand. She is an icon of America's love of display and personality at the expense of sincerity and taste. Everything she sings is charged with self-loving vulgarity; worship me, she bellows, and forget the song. Streisand has a huge instrument and not an inkling of what to do with it. Her primary technique consists of heavy breathing, which turns tenaciously aspirate on vowels or h words. As a small boy, watching her in *Funny Girl* on Broadway, I recoiled at her shallowness. She never deigned to play the role; she was too intent on stopping the show. Alice Faye, who played a similar part in *Rose of Washington Square*, displayed more soul on her worst day. Classical Barbra exposed her hubris, yet her pop singing is every bit as garish. Vulgarity has its place, but only when animated by emotional generosity, which is why, despite her immense popularity, Streisand has never joined the ranks of the great hearts-on-their-sleeves emoters, from Jolson to Garland. They meant it. She doesn't.

Most Underrated Singer:

Bing Crosby. It would have been inconceivable to call Bing Crosby underrated at any time between 1931 and 1965. He was the most popular, admired, and beloved singer the world had ever known. In those years my answer would have been Louis Armstrong or Ethel Waters, who with Crosby invented America's modern vernacular style. But Armstrong at long last routinely receives his due, and much of Waters's work is sadly dated, while the ocean has rolled over Der Bingle. The tide will change. He is still admired for his jazz records (one bandleader called him "the first hip white person born in the United States"), but no less gratifying is his unparalleled versatility. With his perfect time and articulation, Bing could be equally affecting on country, cowboy, Hawaiian, and standard songs. We tend to think of the swing era as pounding feet and flying skirts, but listen to Crosby's great Depression waltzes - "Mexicali Rose," "The One Rose"- and you hear the sober, tremulous flip side of those years. I once saw a skeptical opera expert reduced to tears by Bing's "Sweetheart of Sigma Chi," of all things. No one captured the heartbeat of this nation during the 1930s and 1940s as well as he did, and his best work continues to speak volumes.

- Gary Giddins is the author of Visions of Jazz: The First Century.

(Editor: The criticism of Barbra is not in accord with our guiding principles but I decided to run it as it was an integral part of Gary's piece in American Heritage. I had to smile therefore when I received the following e-mail from Gary:-

> *"You may be amused to hear that American Heritage informs me my little graph on Streisand has prompted more hate mail than any piece in the magazine's history. The previous record-holder was a full-dress article criticizing Robert E. Lee. Apparently there are more Barbra diehards than Confederates. I don't think they got any response on Bing, but then people are more likely to write when they are angry than in agreement."*

Gary has had some nice exposure in a number of USA papers and here's a typical piece from The Palm Beach Post.)

Bing was a cherry of a guy

Gary Giddins, who is writing a biography of **Bing Crosby** for Little, Brown, told *Talk* magazine that his opinion of his subject changed as his research deepened. Giddins began the project with the image that **Gary Crosby**, son of Bing, in his memoir describing his father as ruthless and uncaring. "What I discovered was that he was a man of enormous decency," Giddins said. "Everybody I interviewed adored him. . . . He was much more like the figure that everybody in the country assumed he was when he was alive than he's been made out to be since his death." Gary Crosby admitted to Giddins that much of his book had been exaggerated, and that he — who was alcoholic when the book was written — couldn't remember much of it. "Bing had an Augustinian change in midlife," Giddins said. "He became enormously morally sober in his later years. His butler told me he used to see Mr. Crosby on his knees praying before he went to bed. He had a second chance, and he took it."

Bing Crosby

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries
Please send all advertisements to the Editor

The British Institute of Jazz Studies, 17 The Chase, Crowthorne, Berkshire, RG45 6HT (Tel: 013440775669)

"We are trying to obtain copies of all magazines that have been published by Bing clubs and wondered if any members might be able to help fill gaps, either by supplying originals or allowing us to borrow any file copies they may have to photocopy? All costs, including registered post both ways, payable by us of course. We have all issues of BING except numbers 1 8 15 16 17 18 20 21 22 23 and 25 and all issues of 'Crosby Collector' except Vol. 1 No. 5 and Vol. 6 No. 3. We have no copies of either 'Crosbyana' or 'Crosby Post'. Also we are seeking copies of 'The Road to Bing Crosby' Parts 1 and II. Any help would be much appreciated."

Arthur Blood, 597 Osmaston Rd., Derby DE24 8NE

Arthur now has available the Bing Crosby Christmas stamp at £3 per 20 inclusive of postage to UK members. USA members can order from Wig Wiggins, price $5 for 20. Also Arthur has produced a nice Bing key ring which is shown below. This can be purchased for £2.50, direct from Arthur.

Roger Addey, Swallowdale, 17 Tehidy Gardens, Camborne, Cornwall, TR14 0ET,

"I am anxious to obtain a UK format video of 'Hopscotch', a film made in 1980, starring Walter Matthau. It was issued on video in 1992 but it now seems to be out of print. If someone has a copy which they would like to sell on, I should be very interested."

George Patmore, 53 Severn Way, Cressage, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY5 6DS (tel: 01952 510469)

Wishes to obtain Part Five only (1961 - 1977) of Fred Reynolds "The Crosby Collection" 1926 -1977. Contact George direct.

George O'Reilly, 8 St. James' Terrace, Malahide, Co. Dublin, Ireland (Tel: 003531 8454066)

George is anxious to obtain another set of the Fred Reynolds 'The Crosby Collection' volumes and would be very pleased to hear from anyone who has a set for sale.

Bert Bishop, Tideway, 100 Imperial Avenue, Maylandsea, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 6AJ

Bing CDs from the collection of the late Geoff Block are still available from Bert. Write to him for details. Also from Geoff's effects, Bert offers 30 BING mags (nos. 94-123) in pristine condition for £25 the lot. incl. p. & P.

Stan Woodford, 6 Mariam Gardens, Hornchurch, Essex RM12 6QA (tel. 01708 445049)

Stan has on offer many VHS (UK format) video items and film song compilations of Bing that may be of interest. SAE for lists please.

The Record Centre, 45-46 Loveday St., Birmingham B4 6NR (tel. 0121-359-7399)

Ray Purslow and his team are real supporters of the Crosby cause and for your Crosby CDs (and LPs), contact Ray. You can do it all by phone and pay by credit card if you like. It couldn't be easier.

Michael Crampton, address on inside front cover.

The following are available from Michael:

"Bing Crosby on Compact Disc", A5 soft bound - with details of the vast majority of Bing's CDs. An invaluable reference book. 155 pages. £10.45

"Bing Crosby - the illustrated biography" - Michael Freedland's hardback biography. Available to club members at a specially reduced price. 127 pages, £13.

"Bing Crosby - a Diary of a Lifetime" - A4 hardback, a definitive look at events in Bing's life - beautifully illustrated. 96 pages, £12.

"BING magazine" - back issues of numbers 94, 95, 101, 104, 106, 107, 108, 110, 118-120, 122-124 available. £2 each.

BING BINDERS

Keep your magazines in mint condition by storing them in these specially made binders. They have blue covers with BING in gold on the spine and hold 10 copies, which allow them to be easy inserted or removed, yet also open flat for easy reading. Costing £6.99 inc postage, £7.99 to Europe, £8.99 elsewhere, they are available from Ken Mason, 12 Wycomb Grove, Melton Mowbray, Leics. LE13 1EQ.

Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,
Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 236 Andrieux St., Sonoma, California 95476-6909, USA (tel. 707 996 0257 - e-mail Erinssmile@earthlink.net - Web Site address http://home.earthlink.net/~erinssmile/

Club Crosby, BINGANG
Wayne L. Martin, Editor
435 So. Holmes Ave., Kirkwood, Missouri 63122, USA
(e-mail: ClubCrosby@aol.com)
(Members in Europe should enrol via Ken Crossland, 9 Arden Drive, Dorridge, Solihull, B93 8LP)

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society
Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130.

Internet sites:
Bing Crosby Internet Museum:
www.kcmetro.cc.mo.us/~crosby/
The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby
http://www.geocities.com/crissi_n/bing.html

****

OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

Sinatra Music Society, 183 Summerfields Avenue, Halesowen, West Midlands B62 9NU (phone:0121-421-7714) This Society produces a most impressive magazine on a bi-monthly basis and includes features on all artistes performing quality popular music. The annual sub for UK members is £12 and write to Des Davis at the above address for details. Web site address: www.sinatra-ms.com

Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 13 Sunnyside, Heckmondwike, W. Yorks WF16 0LN

Pat Boone Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 63, Sunderland, SR1 1PN

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX

The Al Jolson Society, c/o Richard Selwood, 5 Abbotsfield, Wiveliscombe, Somerset TA4 2SU

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email:tony@flias.globalnet.co.uk)

The Dean Martin Association, P. O. Box 80, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1ZR

Books 'n' Bing

The first two new Bing related books were reviewed on his web site by Steven Lewis some time ago and he has kindly agreed that I can reproduce his words here. The third review comes from Ken Crossland.

1. 'So Far So Funny'

If you enjoyed Carroll Carroll's "None of Your Business," you will also delight in Hal Kanter's new book, "So Far, So Funny." Both Carroll and Kanter wrote comedy material for Bing. Carroll wrote for Bing's Kraft Music Hall while Kanter (along with Bill Morrow) wrote for the Philco and Chesterfield shows. He also was one of the writers of "Road to Bali."

Mukat P. Jablonski brought Kanter's book to my attention. For years Mukat has been looking for the script to the Chesterfield Show that never was — the show that was supposed to be taped Oct. 24, 1950 with Al Jolson. Jolson died on the 23rd. Turns out that Kanter was the man who interviewed Jolson for the show and wrote the portion of the show that would have featured Al. Al would have discussed his recent trip to Korea to entertain the troops.

Kanter reveals that he admired Al as a performer but, of course, not as much as Jolson admired himself. Kanter wrote most of the lines in the Crosby shows in which Bing made fun of Al's lack of humility.

JOLSON: Bingy, boy, I loved that introduction. And I love you ... and you know why?
Crosby: Why?
JOLSON: Because when a man's good, you're big enough to come out and say so!
Crosby: It seemed the thing to do, Al. I figured it would sound better if I said it.

Crosby fans will find Kanter's book a real treat. Bing is mentioned on more pages — nearly 30 — than any other performer. Kanter relates many first hand experiences with Bing and his first family, and his evaluation of Bing is quite positive. For example:

"Every performer had enormous respect and affection for our star. Bing could be an engaging conversationalist, the consummate gentleman, tactful, witty, easygoing and thoroughly professional in his work. He expected the same from his employees." (p107)

"Working conditions with the Crosby show from the very beginning became the yardstick by which I was to measure all subsequent assignments, most of which were no match for the pleasant model Crosby and Morrow set with Bill's co-producer, Murdo MacKenzie." (p108)

"Bing was the king of cool. There is only one instance I recall him losing it.... Later, backstage, Crosby said to me, 'Never do that again. Never.' The look in his blue eyes was the father of the laser beam. There may still be a hole in the wall behind where I stood." (p111)

Kanter also recounts how Bing dealt with his fans and how he helped resurrect Judy Garland's career after her slide into drug abuse and depression. He also recalls a phone conversation with an obviously inebriated Dixie Lee. Regarding Bing's death , Kanter writes:

"Bing Crosby left suddenly. Quickly. On a golf course in Spain. Once the most popular singer in the world, Bing finally got what he had wanted for the two decades I knew him: to be left alone." (p272)

Steven Lewis

2. Beyond the Rainbow

A new biography of Judy Garland has hit the book stores. 'Beyond the Rainbow' by Sheridan Morley and Ruth Leon contains numerous candid shots of Judy and friends, but if the references to Bing are any indication, the book may be full of errors. For example:

"Bing Crosby was now running the most successful of all weekly radio shows and, with the illness of his beloved wife and co-star Dixie Lee, he turned to Judy to replace her. Over the next six months, Judy re-established her radio stardom until, in November, 1952, her second daughter and the first of her two Luft children, Lorna, was born." (page 121)

The authors are referring to Judy's return to show business after a nervous breakdown. However, Dixie Lee appeared only once on Bing's radio show (the 1950 Christmas show). Probably the authors are confusing Judy's career resurrection, which occurred with the assistance of the Crosby show with the week that Judy substituted for Bing in November 1952 following the

death of his wife.

Incidentally, Hall Kanter discusses Judy's return vis-a-vis the Crosby show in detail in his new book, 'So Far, So Funny' (pages 113-114). For those who view Bing as only cold and distant, Kanter's account of Bing's sensitive handling of Judy will come as a big surprise.

Steven Lewis

3. Backstage at the Dean Martin Show by Lee Hale

Ask the average Crosby fan in the UK what they associate with Dean Martin and the answer will probably be booze, Sinatra's Rat Pack, and the Martin and Lewis double act - in that order. But in the States, it's a whole lot different. Dean Martin's lasting memory for many people is as the host of a weekly variety show that ran on NBC between 1964 and 1974. It was the most popular, most expensive and most laid back show in television history and Lee Hale, who served both as musical director and Dino's stand in, has now chronicled the ten year history of the show.

Bing guests on The Dean Martin Show

It was a show that should never have happened. Martin didn't like the idea of a weekly schedule one little bit and came up with an outrageous list of demands that were designed to frighten away NBC. They didn't, and Martin was left with no other option but to turn up. Not that he had to turn up much. One of his conditions had been that he would only be around on Sundays, the day of the taping, and during the week, his guests - which were largely the great and the good of American show business - were expected to learn their lines alongside Lee Hale and the rest of the cast. When Dean did show up, he had little idea about any of the sketches, but carried it all off with a spontaneity that set the show apart from the other variety offerings of the time. It ran nine full seasons, by which time Dean's problems off stage and loss of interest on, had contributed to a drop in the ratings. The show came off the air in 1974 and apart from the odd special plus nights in Las Vegas, Dean Martin's career ended with it.

The book has several references to Bing, who was a regular guest. Whilst it is not clear if Bing put up with the routine of rehearsing with a stand-in (Sinatra didn't), Hale describes him as "the ultimate professional - memorised everything he had to, didn't complain about anything, and disappeared as soon as possible". The other interesting remark was about the size of Bing's voice - something to which anyone who saw him in person will testify. Two or three unfamiliar pictures of Bing from the show are included. All in all, an interesting read, especially if taken alongside Nick Tosches' excellent biography of a year of two back. The only thing it lacks is a detailed listing of the individual shows.

The book is published by Taylor Publishing Co., Dallas, Texas and the ISBN number is 0-87833-170-0. Cost $22.95 - I got my copy from Amazon.

Ken Crossland

A Southern Memoir

I suspect that members must be tired of reading about my holidays but I must just tell you about this year's trip to the USA as we toured the Deep South!

In March and April, Pat and I toured from Dallas through San Antonio, Houston, New Orleans, Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga, Charleston, Savannah, Aiken and Atlanta. Bing touched some of these places during his tour in 1943 and naturally I visited the local libraries to research the newspapers of the day. Some libraries maintain clippings files for visiting celebrities and these were very useful to me too as they often supplemented what I found in the local papers. I soon had a more complete idea of Bing's activities in April to June 1943 and these are set out below. However there are still some gaps in his schedule and naturally I'll keep looking.

1943

Apr 17 'Moonlight Becomes You' reaches No. 1 in the charts. Bing and Dixie leave by train for Mexico City for a vacation and by chance Bob Hope is on the same train. Hope attempts to persuade Bing to stop off with him in Dallas for a show but Bing declines. During his time in Mexico, Bing is reported to have sold seven of his horses to a banker named Carlos Gomez for $13,000. Following his vacation, he sets out on a War Bond fund raising tour with Phil Silvers.

May 6 (a.m.) Bing and Dixie, accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. Dick Gibson and Barney Dean, arrive in New Orleans from Mexico City. It is Dixie's first visit home in 14 years and Bing's first time in the City.

May 7 (3:00 p.m.) Bing and Bob Hope take part in a benefit golf match at the City Park No. 1 golf

course, New Orleans. Bob and state champion Mrs. Sam Israel beat Bing and Mrs. M. D. Kostmayer Jr. one up in the nine hole match. Ed Dudley, President of the PGA also plays making a fivesome. A crowd of over 3,000 produces $2,500 for the Red Cross motor corps. Bing and Bob entertain the crowd and hold an auction of items (including Bing's tie) for war bonds. Accompanied by guitarist Tony Romano, Bing sings 'Way Down Yonder in New Orleans'. At 8:30 p.m. Bing and Bob lead a parade around City Park Stadium in front of 10,000 people. They go on to headline a show in the stadium and Bing sings 'Way Down Yonder in New Orleans, 'As Time Goes By' and 'White Christmas'. Bing and Dixie leave for Atlanta after the show.

May 16 (starting at 2 p.m.) In Chicago at Soldier Field to celebrate the third annual observance of 'I Am An American Day', Bing sings in front of an audience of 130,000. Dinah Shore, John Garfield, Paulette Goddard and the Navy Band conducted by Lt. Cmdr. Eddie Peabody also take part. At 6:30 p.m., Bing acts as guest quiz master on the Quiz Kids radio programme which is broadcast from station WENR on the Blue Network. He assists quiz master Joe Kelly for the first part of the show and takes over himself for the final segment.

Bing and Dixie are in New York and are seen at Belmont Park racecourse.

May 20 Bing arrives at the Warwick Hotel in Philadelphia from New York. He goes to Pine Valley Country Club to practice his golf shots. It is assumed that Dixie has returned to Hollywood with Mr. and Mrs. Gibson.

May 21 Bob Hope joins Bing in Philadelphia. At 12 noon they appear in the Four Freedoms War Bond Show at the Strawbridge and Clothier department store where Bing sings 'As Time Goes By' and duets 'Road to Morocco' with Bob. They then visit Mayor Samuel at City Hall before arriving at Llanerch Country Club to put on a Navy Service League Show with Frances Langford and Jerry Colonna for the Philadelphia Recruiting Office. Advertised as 2:00 to 2:30 p.m. A five hole golf match follows at 3:00 p.m. with Ed Dudley and Harold (Tug) McSpaden and a crowd of 6,000 watch the proceedings in pouring rain. $130,000 worth of War Bonds are sold.

May 22 Bing is on a train en route for Memphis where he is to take part in a golf match with Bob Hope. Hope is to fly down.

May 23 Arriving in Memphis, Bing discovers that Bob Hope's plane has been grounded in Atlanta by poor weather. During the afternoon, Bing plays with Byron Nelson against Ed Dudley and local pro Jake Fondren at the Memphis Country Club before a crowd of 10,000. Bing and Byron win 2 up and Bing has a 72. After the golf, Bing puts on a 45 minute show at the course singing 'Miss You', 'As Time Goes By', 'Please' and 'White Christmas' accompanied by the staff orchestra of radio station WMC. He goes on to entertain wounded soldiers at Kennedy General Hospital before catching the 8:14 p.m. train for the long journey to Washington DC.

May 24 In Washington DC, Bing, Babe Ruth and Kate Smith entertain the 29,221 crowd at a baseball game between Norfolk Naval Station and Washington Senators. Bing spends time in the Norfolk dugout before going on to the field at 8:36 p.m. for his seventh inning songs from the home plate. He sings 'Dinah', 'As Time Goes By' and 'White Christmas'.

May 26 It is announced that the Del Mar racetrack is to be turned into an aeroplane parts manufacturing plant.

May 27 One of Bing's horses 'Don Bingo' wins the $3,000 Glorifier - Handicap at Belmont Park in New York. The horse is a product of the Binglin Stock Farm in Argentina and its victory is its third in five races. Press comment suggests that it is now "a red-hot long-shot hope" for the forthcoming Suburban Handicap.

May 29 Bing joins Bob Hope in Atlanta, Georgia and they play golf at the Capitol City Country Club with Morton Bright, Bobby Dodd and Ed Dudley as a warm up for a major benefit on the following day.

May 30 Starting at 3:00 p.m., Bing and Bob Hope play in an exhibition golf match for the benefit of the Red Cross at the Capitol City Club before a crowd of around 10,000 which was then the largest gallery in Atlanta golf history. Bing and Ed Dudley beat Hope and Johnny Bulla 2 and 1 in the 14 hole contest. During the show at the course after the golf, Bing sings 'White Christmas'. Over $300,000 worth of war bonds are sold at the event.

May 31 Bing's horse 'Don Bingo' wins the 57th Suburban Handicap at Belmont Park, New York earning a winner's bankroll of $27,600. A new world record for betting is set with $2.699 million passing through the machines.

Jun 1 Tentative plans for a benefit golf match in Birmingham, Alabama have fallen through and at short notice, Bing is invited to entertain the Waacs at Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia. After a short rehearsal with a pianist, Bing entertains a crowd of around 5,000 in the outdoor theatre singing 'Stardust', 'You'd Be So Nice To Come Home To', Dinah', 'As Time Goes By', and 'White Christmas'. Bing stays the night at the Read House in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Jun 2 Bing and Ed Dudley arrive in Nashville by special army car just after noon and check into the Hermitage Hotel. Bing telephones Dixie in Hollywood on arrival. Starting at 2:00 p.m. Bing takes part in a golf match with Ed Dudley against Byron Nelson and local champion Adrian McManus at Belle Meade Country Club in front of a crowd of 5,000. Nelson and McManus finish two up in the 15 hole match. Bing gives a short show afterwards on the course and auctions various items to help sell War Bonds. It is estimated that $500,000 of War Bonds are sold. The event is broadcast over station WSM. Bing and Ed Dudley catch a train at 7:00 p.m. for Chicago.

Bing and Bob Hope play in a golf benefit for handicapped children at Swope Park in Kansas City, Missouri.

Jun 9 Bing shoots a 73 at the Broadmoor Golf Course at Colorado Springs. His playing partners are Ed Dudley, Bud Maytag and Jim Heaney.

Jun 13 Bing leaves Colorado Springs for Hollywood after a few days rest.

I made many photocopies of the various newspaper reports and these are now held in Ron Bosley's archives. The warmth of the coverage of Bing's activities was apparent wherever he appeared and here is one example from the Nashville Tennessean in which Bob Rule, Sports Editor, gives his view of Bing's visit.

"He was marvelous at the bond auction. Immediately, when he walked out on the platform and took over the microphone, he captivated the crowd. His easy manner endears him to you. Never have I seen a more receptive audience....Crosby's golf needs no apologies, but Nashville people didn't see him even close to his best. The man is dead tired. He has been doing this for weeks and weeks, and he's actually numb from the constant strain. He has few moments he can call his own. And I still say the man will come out of this war one of America's heroes. In fact I'm going to write Sen. Kenneth D. McKellar and suggest he be decorated with the highest honor the Army can bestow upon a civilian. Crosby was driven to Nashville from Chattanooga in an Army car, and the soldier who drove him won't have to worry about cigarettes for a while. Bing gave him $50. He gave his caddy, dusky Hardy Baker, $6.

In 12 years of sports writing, this person has never met a man of Crosby's personality. He's the most sincere easiest-to-talk-with individual I've ever had the pleasure of contacting - absolutely tops. And if more of us had that easy going manner of his, we'd live 10 years longer."

How about that for a tribute! All of the newspaper coverage I saw was in a similar vein.

Bing visited Aiken in South Carolina on several occasions over the years and I had always wondered what the attraction was. Aiken was a retreat of the very rich in the early part of the last century as it was as far south as you could go without the danger of yellow fever etc. As a result, a Winter Colony, as it became known, developed and there are many vast mansions. Bing's hosts each time he visited Aiken were Mr. and Mrs. Conrad Ruckelshaus who, I regret to say, are completely unknown to me. Perhaps one of our readers can provide background information about them and their connection with Bing. Aiken is close to Augusta, Georgia where the Masters golf tournament is held each April and this was one of the reasons for Bing's visits. The other reason was to take part in an tournament himself at the Palmetto Golf Club. He and his partner came fourth in 1957 and Bing made a nice speech accepting their prize.

Houston in Texas was the scene of a significant event in January 1976. This is how my diary reads now:-

1976

Jan 30 Bing and Kathryn plus their children fly into Houston, Texas on the Brown and Root plane. Bob Moonan and his wife are on the same flight. The Crosbys stay with Mrs. Ernest Cockrell and the William Liedtkes.

Jan 31 After a morning rehearsal, Bing and Kathryn plus their children present Bing Crosby and Friends as a benefit performance for the Houston Symphony Association at the Houston Symphony Society's Star Spangled Ball at the Hyatt Regency's big ballroom in Houston. The event raises $100,000 and keeps the Symphony Orchestra in business. Pianist Bob Moonan accompanies Bing who is also supported by the Houston Symphony Orchestra under Lawrence Foster. The Crosbys receive four standing ovations.

Yes, it was the start of Bing's return to show business in a big way. He was obviously encouraged by his return to the live stage in Houston and this must have given him the confidence to embark on his concert tours.

Pat and I had dinner with Crosby enthusiasts Norman Wolfe and Ruth Carr in Atlanta and I enquired about Norman's book about Bing which is called 'Troubadour'. I have read the draft and it is a powerful and interesting look at Bing's life with particular emphasis on the various factors happening in America which impacted on Bing. Norman is completing his revision of the book at present and he will then be seeking a suitable publisher. I have said that the ICC would be honoured to have the book printed although ideally it would be better if an external publisher could be found who would ensure that the book obtains wider distribution. I am attempting to find a publisher for my diary of Bing's life as well as I too should like it to be seen by a wider audience.

So another holiday in the USA again produced Crosby dividends. Next year, Canada. Now where did Bing visit in Canada?

Malcolm Macfarlane

P.S. I went through Glasgow in June and couldn't resist going in to the library to investigate Bing's visit in 1944. Here's what the papers said.

BING CAME TO GLASGOW

Bing Crosby fans gatecrashed the platform of a Glasgow railway station last night when Bing himself made his way to a train after a short visit to the city. Called on to sing he sang a few bars of 'The Blue of the Night'. Asked by Porter Mathieson what he thought of Scotland, Bing's reply was to ask all present to sing 'I Belong to Glasgow'. Bing joined in heartily.

(Daily Record - August 26, 1944)

KEITH PARKINSON'S
CELLULOID CROSBY

The review in "Variety" called it "a backstage story without even the suggestion of a new idea".

We needn't concern ourselves with the plot for very long. Bing plays a Broadway performer who spots Judith Allen when she is part of a small time vaudeville act. They fall for each other. Complication number one is that she is already betrothed to Jack Oakie, also part of the same act. Complication number two is that Crosby is already spoken for by Lilyan Tashman.

But the public loved *Too Much Harmony*. It opened in New York at the Paramount (naturally) and broke the theatre's box office record. That record had been set three months earlier in the June of 1933 by *College Humor* which happened to be Bing's first Paramount picture under a three year contract with that studio. The Paramount theatre's policy at the time was to provide a stage show to support the big screen entertainment. For *Too Much Harmony* Roscoe Ates and Grace Hayes were the on stage attraction. Both are more or less forgotten now and weren't exactly red hot in 1933. Hayes was in films for about ten years but failed to make any impact. She floated round the studios without being under contract and can be glimpsed in M-G-M's *Babes in Arms* in 1939 and the Monogram cheapie *Zis Boom Bah* two years later. The latter film is worth a mention because she plays mother to her real life son Peter Lind Hayes. He died in 1999, having claimed immortality by recording "Life gets tee-jus", which seemed to be played on the BBC Light Programme most weeks during the 1950s. Roscoe Ates was a character actor cast in mainly comic parts as the sidekick to screen cowboys. The point of mentioning the New York Paramount stage acts is to emphasise the box office popularity of Bing so early in his screen career. It certainly wasn't Ates and Hayes who packed them in. They were very much part of a supporting programme. It was Crosby who was the box-office magnet. Here he was, first billed in a feature film for only the third time in his Hollywood career.

Even at the dawn of his film career Bing was cautious of the demands Hollywood would make on him. In an interview with a Los Angeles newspaper in September, 1933, he went on record as saying: "I don't want stardom. At least not in *Too Much Harmony*. If a picture flops, they always want to blame it on the star and I haven't enough to do in that picture to justify me taking the responsibility. No, I don't want to be starred and have everyone ridiculing me." It was an attitude Bing would return to again and again during his career in films. Bing's 1933 comment is puzzling though, because all Paramount's publicity was centred on Crosby being the star. Surely he must have known that.

The filming of *Too Much Harmony* started at the beginning of July, 1933 and continued for six weeks. By the end of September it was being exhibited. Not unusual for the time when studios wanted to get a return on their investment as soon as possible. Contrast this with

MUSIC IN THE AIR...SONGS IN YOUR HEART!
6
BRAND NEW SONG HITS
The twinkling toes of the chorus girls... the sensuous rhythm of the hot-cha tunes! Amidst it all a boy wooing a girl while Broadway watches and calls it "acting"!
HOLLYWOOD'S PRETTIEST GIRLS
"TOO MUCH HARMONY"
with
the star of 'College Humor,
BING CROSBY
JACK OAKIE
SKEETS GALLAGHER
Judith Allen Harry Green
Lilyan Tashman Ned Sparks
A Paramount Picture
THEATRE

Stagecoach (1966) which I wrote about last year. That had an eleven week shooting schedule and took a further eight months to receive its premiere. However, there was a sound reason why speed was of the essence during this period of Paramount's production programme. The studio was still in receivership as a result of financial difficulties. A new administration was brought in with Emanuel Cohen being appointed production chief. We'll hear more of his involvement with *Too Much Harmony* shortly. The line producer of *Too Much Harmony* was William LeBaron. He'd been with the studio as associate producer until 1927 when he was enticed away to take up

the vice-presidency of what later became RKO pictures. He returned to his old studio when Paramount struck problems in the early thirties and he eventually became the studio's production chief. It was a position he held until 1941. By then the studio was once more in a sound financial situation. Bing can take much of the credit for the studio's survival and revival.

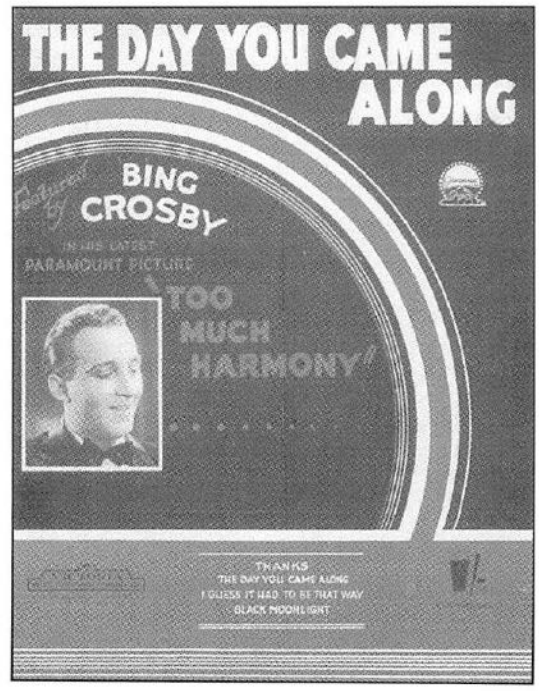
Although I dismissed the film's story in a couple of sentences, it is worth revisiting the plot and its writer. Joseph L. Mankiewicz was responsible for story and script. He was a self confessed Crosby idoliser and one of his after dinner party pieces was to give a passable impersonation of Bing. He'd worked for Paramount since the silent days and in 1929 his name was attached to the film *Close Harmony*. That film was shot in both silent and sound formats and Mank wrote the titles for the silent version. The plot bears a passing resemblance to *Too Much Harmony*. In an interview published in the "New York Times" dated 24th May, 1950 Mankiewicz revealed that he did not get his own way as far as the finer detail of the plot was concerned. He had been summoned to the office of production chief Emanuel Cohen on the morning of July 3rd, 1933. Shooting was to commence that day when he was informed that Cohen objected to Manks original plot which depicts Bing falling in love with Lilyan Tashman. Bing was already seen as having an audience out there which expected him to behave in a certain way. Tradition required leading men to be wooed by the girl. Cohen wanted Bing to conform to the highest standards of American manhood. Mankiewicz obliged and carried out a hurried re-write which allowed the Crosby character to have his manly virtue remain intact. The first romantic advances were made by Miss Tashman. Mankiewicz eventually had the clout to write things his own way. He waited until around 1950 to get the backstage life saga out of his system when he both wrote and directed the definitive Broadway behind the scenes film: *All About Eve*. Also co-incidental is the director of the 1929 *Close Harmony* film carrying out a similar task four years later. He was A. Edward Sutherland. He got on well with Bing and they worked together on *Mississippi* (1935) and *Dixie* (1943). A couple of years after *Dixie* Bing hired Sutherland to direct *Abie's Irish Rose*, a less than successful foray by Crosby into film production.

In October of 1933, when the film was in its first full month of release, M-G-M wanted to preview *The Dancing Lady*. It was a film they had just finished shooting and about which they had doubts. It had gone over schedule and over budget due to the illness of its leading actor, Clark Gable. M-G-M chose the Fox theatre on Wilshire Boulevard in Los Angeles to test audience reaction. They had specifically selected the Fox because it was playing *Too Much Harmony*. They reasoned that the audience would be receptive and correctly anticipated that at the 8.30pm showing there would be a full house of 2,000 patrons because of the appeal of the Crosby picture. Gable's leading lady was Joan Crawford but it was her dancing partner who would figure significantly in Bing's career. That was Fred Astaire, whose movie debut was in *The Dancing Lady*.

On August 27th, 1933, between the completion of filming *Too Much Harmony* and its release on September 22nd Bing recorded four of the songs Sam Coslow and Arthur Johnston had written for the picture. "I Guess It Had to be That Way" was trimmed from the release print after Bing's Decca recording date. "Black Moonlight" was admirably suited to the Crosby treatment even though it was sung on the film's soundtrack by Barbara Van Brunt with leading lady Judith Allen miming the vocal.

Of the remaining two songs "The Day You Came Along" is the least remembered, whilst "Thanks" is an evergreen forever associated with Bing. The three songs recorded by Bing that August day which were seen in the final release version of *Too Much Harmony* were significant musical milestones to Bing and he included them in re-recorded versions when he put together his musical autobiography in 1954. Two Coslow-Johnston songs written for Bing and included in the film which were never recorded by him were "Buckin' the Wind" and "Boo-boo-boo". Both were fun numbers rather than quality ballads. Surprisingly, in view of the songs available to publicise the movie, they were the two songs featured in Paramount's publicity short series *Hollywood on Parade*, issue 4 of 1933 being released to spark interest in *Too Much Harmony*.

Keith Parkinson



THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

LAST ROSE OF SUMMER, THE Song. It took Bing twenty years to record this song after he was first heard featuring it in his stage act in the 1943 film *Dixie*. In the movie he sang it on stage as part of his minstrel act. Then he was vocally supported by Billy de Wolfe, Lynne Overman and Eddie Foy jnr. The words are from a poem of Thomas Moore's which are set to the music of a traditional Irish air. The end result makes for a beautiful ballad.

LAST ROUND UP, THE Song. Like "The Last Rose of Summer", Bing didn't give this the treatment it deserved when he included it in a medley sung during *We're Not Dressing* (1934). It forms part of the "I Positively Refuse to Sing" sequence. He did, however, record it for 78 issue a couple of months before *We're Not Dressing* went before the cameras. Words and music are by Billy Hill, who was the foremost American composer of cowboy songs during the 1930s.

LASZLO, ERNEST (1904-1984) Director of photography. Hungarian born cameraman Laszlo worked on two Bing films. He had sole D of P credit on *Road to Rio* (1948) and shared the chores on *Riding High* two years later with George Barnes. He was under contract to Paramount for many years and when the studio system crumbled was much in demand for prestige pictures. One of these, *Ship of Fools* (1965), won him an Academy Award.

LAUGH AND CALL IT LOVE Song. Like all but one of the songs featured in *Sing You Sinners* (1938) Bing shared vocals with his screen brothers, Donald O'Connor and Fred MacMurray. The three Beebe Brothers include it in their night club act. It was one of three songs specially composed for the film by Johnny Burke and James V. Monaco.

LAWFORD, PETER (1923-1984) Actor who sang a little. If you had to hazard a guess at a Lawford/Crosby film link you might plump for *Robin and the 7 Hoods* (1964). You'd be wrong but as Lawford was part of the Sinatra clan in the 1960s you'd be given half a mark. Lawford never appeared on screen at the same time as Bing but both were involved in the multi-talent films *Pepe* (1960) and *That's Entertainment* (1974). A couple of books which were published after Lawford's death tell the story of the son of a British knight visiting California in 1938 and staying on to become a lightweight leading man in several M-G-M films of the forties and fifties. Lawford's descent into drink and drugs led to an earlier than necessary death.

LAZY Song. Just one of a dozen or so winners from *Holiday Inn* (1942). Words and music by Irving Berlin, who never understood why people needed to collaborate on songs. The song slots neatly into the plot. Bing retires from show business to take up farming and "Lazy" is sung to counterpoint the reality of the strenuous life of working the land. Some songs fit Bing like a glove and this is one of them.

LeBARON, WILLIAM (1883-1958) Producer. LeBaron's Paramount connection is covered in the preceding "Celluloid Crosby" article. He produced *Too Much Harmony* (1933) and *Rhythm on the River* (1940) with Bing as star. That second picture was his last for Paramount before moving to 20th Century-Fox when he used his talents to develop that studio's colourful musicals. Think of the light escapist fare starring the likes of Alice Faye, Betty Grable and Carmen Miranda and you'll get a measure of the man's achievements before his eventual retirement at the end of the 1940s.

LEARN TO CROON Song. One of several songs written for Bing's second Paramount feature *College Humor* (1933) by Sam Coslow and Arthur Johnston. Bing is cast in the unlikely role of a college professor and sings "Learn to Croon" at a college dance. In *Duffy's Tavern* (1944) the voice of Bing is heard singing the song when it emanates from a phonograph. It is just possible that moviegoers heard the song before they saw Bing deliver it in *College Humor*. That's because it was used in a 1933 *Paramount on Parade* short when Jack Oakie impersonated Bing's singing style.

LEDERER, CHARLES (1910-1976) Screenwriter who also directed three films. Did it really take four people to write the dialogue for *Double or Nothing* (1937)? So the film's credits would have us believe. For this hour and a half lightweight Crosby comedy, Lederer developed a story already written by M. Coates Webster. He was assisted by Erwin Gelsey, John C. Moffitt and Duke Atterberry. That was the way Lederer usually worked and few of his credits are for solo screenplays. The standout exception is *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953). The films Lederer directed are long forgotten.

LEE, PEGGY [Norma Deloris Egstrom] (1920-) Singer, songwriter and actress. To keep this entry to a manageable size it is the latter category that I will cover here. In 1950 Peggy guested in *Mr. Music* when she sang "Life is so Peculiar" with Bing and the Merry Macs. At that time she had been a regular on Bing's radio programmes and would be used on Decca's album of the film *White Christmas* (1954) because Rosemary Clooney's contract with Columbia records prevented her repeating her co-starring role on wax. Peggy Lee was first glimpsed on celluloid in 1943 when she had a guest spot in *Stage Door Canteen*. Her first dramatic leading role was in the first sound remake of *The Jazz Singer* (1953). She followed this with an equally effective acting part as Jack Webb's leading lady in *Pete Kelly's Blues* (1955). Between those two she sang some of her own songs on the soundtrack of Disney's feature cartoon *Lady and the Tramp* (1955). She ended her flirtation with Hollywood in 1970 when her singing voice was also used for *Pieces of Dreams*.

LET ME SING AND I'M HAPPY Song. A Jolson song in a Crosby film? Some mistake, surely? But a snatch of this early Irving Berlin composition is sung by Bing and Danny Kaye in *White Christmas* (1954). It is utilised in a montage illustrating how Crosby and Kaye's entertainment careers have progressed since their discharge from the army. The Jolson connection began when Al sang it in the 1930 film *Mammy*, but its revival in *The Jolson Story* (1946) brought it to the attention of far more viewers.

LET'S CALL A HEART A HEART Song. One of four songs specially composed by Johnny Burke and Arthur Johnston for the 1936 *Pennies from Heaven*. Bing cut a Decca single of the song on July 29, 1936.

LET'S FALL IN LOVE Song. There was no 'proper' recording by Bing of this 1930s standard by Ted Koehler and

Harold Arlen. We are treated to a few lines from the song when Bing sandwiches it between 'Pennies From Heaven' and 'South of the Border' in *Pepe*. We see it in that brief sequence when Cantinflas comes across Bing in his car at the film studio entrance and they finish up singing together. Its other link with Bing came in 1937 when a Crosby soundalike crooned it in the Columbia picture *It Happened in Hollywood*.

LET'S MAKE LOVE Film. Bing guested in this 1960 20th. Century-Fox film. His contribution to the film took place on June 15th, 1960, the same day he filmed his guest sequence for the above mentioned *Pepe*. His hour's work on the film enabled him to coach Yves Montand so that the Frenchman could woo Marilyn Monroe with his rendition of 'Incurably Romantic'. Crosby's lesson was so successful that Montand and Monroe had a brief fling off set.

LET'S NOT BE SENSIBLE. Song With the retirement of Johnny Burke it was Sammy Cahn who collaborated with tunesmith James Van Heusen on songs for the final Road picture, *The Road to Hong Kong* (1962). 'Let's Not Be Sensible' is a romantic ballad and both Bing and Joan Collins take a crack at it. The issue of the soundtrack album could have been an afterthought because the duet in its original form was incomplete. The film's action recommences before Bing has the opportunity to sing the last word in the song's lyric 'love'. To make the recording presentable for release to the public, conductor Robert Farnon used Mike Sammes to sing the missing word which was then spliced into the soundtrack version. Of course, this means it is no impossible for anyone who knows of this deceit to listen attentively to the song without waiting impatiently for the concluding bars.

LET'S START THE NEW YEAR RIGHT Song. One of Irving Berlin's calendar songs for *Holiday Inn* (1942). We first hear the song in the sequence where the inn is opened to the public for the first time on New Year's Eve and Bing sings it on the stroke of midnight. The song ends the film when it is reprised by Bing, Fred Astaire, Marjorie Reynolds and Virginia Dale.

LET'S TAKE THE LONG WAY HOME Song. There's no mistaking what's on Bing's mind when he makes this musical suggestion to Betty Hutton in *Here Come The* WAVES (1944). As a result, Miss Hutton realises she has fallen for Bing. Johnny Mercer wrote the words to Harold Arlen's tune.

LEVANT, OSCAR (1906-1972) Composer, actor, pianist, author and professional neurotic. He was only in the one Crosby film but Oscar Levant was memorable as Billy Starbuck in *Rhythm on the River* (1940). He was cast as the assistant to Basil Rathbone, a composer suffering from writers block. Starbuck's every other line was either sarcastic or cynical, which fitted the image Levant so loved to project. The same Levant persona can be detected on the radio appearances he made with Bing. There were many sides to the man. His writing skills extended to three autobiographies which allowed him to proclaim his genius, his hypochondria and his insomnia. He befriended George Gershwin and his musical skills made him the foremost interpreter of Gershwin's compositions. He became a successful concert pianist but only after struggling to make ends meet by giving piano lessons and working with dance bands. He wrote scores for early Hollywood musicals such as *Love Comes Along* (1930) and *Music is Magic* (1935). He was Al Jolson's pianist when Jolie took over the Kraft Music Hall half hours from Bing. He acted in major Hollywood films like An *American in Paris* (1951) and *The Band Wagon* (1953). He became much in demand on late night talk shows on American television where he would regale his audience with his psychological hang-ups. In the end, life imitated art and he spent the last twenty years of his life in and out of hospitals, mainly for treatment for his addiction to the many pills and potions he took. He died of a heart attack. I will always remember him as the originator of the line, "I knew Doris Day before she was a virgin."

Keith Parkinson

TIME MARCHES BACK.

Yesterday's News from Entertainment magazines
In the last issue, Jim Newell mentioned that he was in the process of collating hundreds of his film magazines which go back to the 1930s. I asked him to send us clippings of some of the interesting items and this he has duly done. Jim has kindly offered to send us further cuttings for future editions of BING.

26th. May, 1934 FILM PICTORIAL
THE FILM PARADE - GOING HOLLYWOOD

Beginning with a brightness and sparkle unusual even in this year of 'musical' grace, the story of *Going Hollywood* gradually tails off until it is little more than a very thin decoration to the gorgeously produced show numbers. There can have been none in the long spate of musical pictures which has cost more to produce. The gorgeousness of the settings, the beauty and number of the dancing girls represent many thousands of dollars.

Marion Davies has wonderful support all through. As a beginning, there is Bing Crosby as her leading man; and Bing has already established himself as the favourite leading man for musical pictures, as surely as he had previously established his position as a radio crooner. Then there is the direction of Raoul Walsh and the dance direction of the famous Madame Albertina Rasch, to say nothing of the famed song-writing team, Brown and Freed. Marion herself looks younger and prettier than ever; in the straight acting sequences she remains the great star she has always been. But we must admit that song-and-dance shows are not her best medium. In the pleasant sentiment of a story such as *Peg O' My Heart* she is far better placed.

27th July, 1935 - PICTURE SHOW MAGAZINE
Bing Crosby - Designer

You may know that Bing Crosby designs quite a lot of his own clothing. Now he has gone farther and designed a new broadcasting studio. In the new studio Crosby can be seen while he sings, but to him the audience will be completely invisible. He has accomplished this through the use of large mirrors. I hear Bing Crosby designed this arrangement because he prefers to think of himself as singing directly into homes rather than before an audience.

31st October, 1936 - PICTURE SHOW MAGAZINE.
Kisses

With Bing Crosby acknowledged to be one of the most popular actors of the screen as far as the feminine fans are concerned, it is a fact that Bing has been kissed by his film sweetheart not more than twice in his picture career. Both times the actress thought the script called for the kiss and Bing got it before he had a chance to side-step. It was allowed to remain, much to the delight of the director, who knew bashful Bing's aversion to osculation in public. Bing will stand for honeyed phrases and more or less sedate embraces, but not kisses. It is a well known fact to directors and others working on a Crosby picture that Bing has to be watched carefully when a romantic scene is being made, for he is just as apt as not to run when the action leads up to a sensational clinch.

(Jim: You can't beat a good bit of Osculation! So that's what it's called!)

7th November, 1936 - PICTURE SHOW MAGAZINE
"To Ed Thies with sour memories from Bing Crosby."

This autograph, scrawled across a photograph of the star aroused curiosity in a visitor to Bing's dressing-room. Bing explained with a grin. "The chap I'm autographing this for used to be a Spokane pickle manufacturer," he said. "I worked for him while I was attending Gonzaga University. "What were you doing ?" inquired Madge Evans. "Ssh!" said Bing. "Don't tell a soul I was washing pickles."

7th November, 1936 - PICTURE SHOW MAGAZINE

Again Bing Crosby reveals great artistry - an artistry that makes him an outstanding recording personality. This time he sings another fine number from his latest film backed with the popular hit, "Shoe Shine Boy." "South Sea Island Magic" and "Me and the Moon"- two new tunes recorded on Brunswick 02263 - are both melodious and fascinating. Bing's only serious screen rival is Dick Powell who returns to the Decca list this month, after a long absence, with "The Moon Hangs High" and "Did I Remember". - Decca F6044.

14th January, 1946. DOWN BEAT MAGAZINE. Bing's on Air The Hard Way.

New York - Bing Crosby chairman of the committee to raise $5,000,000 for the Sister Kenny Foundation, kept on the move for a half hour when he went on the air early last month in behalf of the cause. Airing from two studios at WOR, Bing dashed from one to the other where Jimmy Dorsey and his orchestra held forth in one and Patrice Munsel and a studio band in the other.

The Dorsey band accompanied Crosby on the first number and then kept the program jumping while Crosby jumped to and from the other studio for his part of the program with Patrice Munsel. Scheduled to be his only broadcast of the season, Crosby later appeared on the Jerome Kern memorial star-studded program.

14th January 1946. DOWN BEAT MAGAZINE
FRONT COVER HEADLINE.
"Groaner Swings Hips As Death Rumour Spreads."

While rumours were floating thick and fast around the West Coast concerning Bing Crosby's reported death (or at least seriously ill with an incurable ailment) the Groaner was having himself a ball at one of the stay-up-late places. In fact, he was getting a rumba lesson from Nanette Fabray, Bloomer Girl star.

March, 1946 - METRONOME MAGAZINE
Bing

Bing Crosby, safely ensconced once more in the Kraft Music Hall, with a show teeming with the talent of Eddy Duchin, Les Paul, The Charioteers, John Scott Trotter and Frank Morgan, has reportedly turned down both $15,000 per to go on the Hit Parade and half of the General Motors Sunday show at $25,000.

Jim Newell

(Editor: Thanks Jim for some interesting clippings. We look forward to more in our next issue.)

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

John Joyce, 9 Midhurst Grove, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton WV6 8XN

The BING magazine goes from strength to strength. We've never had anything as professional as this, even in Bing's prime years. I thought the Christmas Top 10 and the South Bank Show were very good, especially the Bing content in the former.

I'm still after the AFRS disc 'In Love In Vain' and offer now £200 for the original disc or £50 for a taped copy. I don't think that I shall ever hear again that wonderful Bing voicing of 1946. I did manage to get a copy of the other great Crosby version on AFRS disc of 'My Heart Tells Me' which was from a Treasury Star Parade programme subtitled 'The Voice of the Army Show'. This is a full version and not as on the Spokane disc when Bing cuts the song short due probably to the time factor.

I would also like to comment on, of all things, 'White Christmas'. I'm pretty sure I have all versions including radio and TV. The best one is undoubtedly the film version from 'Holiday Inn' and for the life of me, I can't understand why a single has not been issued of this. Of the recorded versions, the original V-Disc stands out a mile, but not the one on the recent CD set of V-Discs as that is an impostor and not in the same street as the original. A good version of 'White Christmas' is on the CD which Ken Crossland compiled, 'Bing Crosby - The EP Collection'. This was the 1955 voicing by Bing and is pure honey-gold and takes some beating. In my opinion it's better than the 1942 and 1947 versions. It's strange that Bing sang 'White Christmas' so many times yet on his last live Honda Laguna show in 1976 he sang the wrong words!

My favourite TV show is the one he did with Mary Martin in 1962, two great professionals at their very best. This also ends with a terrific duet of 'White Christmas'. My all time No. 1 disc has always been 'Down By The River' - after all that was from the 1930s and that's what Bing was all about, not (good as they are) the 'Galway Bay' / 'Swinging on a Star' / 'True Love' days.

By the way, I still think the Ben Bernie version of 'It All Depends On you' features Bing and Al Rinker.
(Editor: Some definite views from John which could well create some debate.)

Roger Osterholm, Ormond Beach, Florida, USA.

Congratulations on a superb 50th anniversary issue [No. 124, Spring 2000] of BING. Every issue is excellent, but this one surpasses the others—truly outstanding and

informative, despite the references to me.

I was proud to represent Bing's fans on the BBC radio show at Christmas time 1999 and to emphasize the decency of the Old Groaner. I was also humbled by the generous reference made to me in Kathryn Crosby's notice on London TV of my 1994 book on Bing. And I was pleased at the notice of my explanation for Bing's playing golf once in a while about 1930 with Machine Gun Jack McGurn. I'm not as modest as Bing—the references are on pages 19, 37, and 38.

I would also like to add my explanations as to Bing's drinking and his character. He was not an alcoholic, just a drinker, even at times a drunk. He liked to drink, and many youths around age 20 to 25—especially during Prohibition in the Jazz Age—passed through that same stage. Drinking during Prohibition was exciting and very common. Few others had the will power to control it so firmly once they decided their drinking was excessive.

I was pleased that the issue reported my view that only Gary Crosby and Alton Rinker ever spoke negatively with first-hand knowledge of Bing's character, and neither one is credible for devious and personal reasons of their own. My close study shows that Bing was eminently shy, modest, in some ways insecure, and obsessed with the manly interests in sports, hunting, fishing, and comradeship. One columnist suggests shyness as the main reason for Bing's drinking in the 1920s, and I add that this and other traits are also the reasons he was so hard to understand. He modestly placed his tremendous talents "under the aspect of eternity," where they paled in relation to divine and eternal values. Bing knew his own mind and his own firm values. He was firmly and fully "centered," as they say today, he hardly needed applause or compliments, and his old-fashioned decency and manliness of the type common in the 1920s rejected showing any emotions and feelings. He overcame this severe and counterproductive trait after 1960 as well.

Isn't Bing Crosby the archetype of a great social model? Do we have anyone like him today? I stress Bing's character in my Website <www.civilized.org/crosby.html>. For Brits, notice the American spelling of "civilized"—with a zed.

BING magazine No. 124, Spring 2000, page 22, lists many of Crosby's records played in films of the 1990s, but I believe I know one not listed. I think the song was "White Christmas," but now I am not sure. The song appears over and over in the great film "Paradise Road" of 1997, starring Glenn Close. She plays a prisoner of the Japanese in Southeast Asia through World War II, and she plays the record to bolster her morale. What record was it?

Greg Van Beek, 3006 Emerald, West Bend, Wisconsin 53095, USA

Just received my copy of the latest BING mag. from Wig today. As usual, meant to only leaf through it for now, but couldn't stop until I read it cover to cover. Another WONDERFUL issue, and a fitting tribute to fifty fabulous years. You know, the International Al Jolson Society is also celebrating it's 50th anniversary this year. Jolson lived long enough to see the first issue of the club magazine.

Apart from giving you my praise and admiration for your hard work, I'm writing to offer my help with Lionel's upcoming book on Bing's television appearances. I read that you are seeking photos from Bing's TV appearances, and this is my "specialty" if you will. I have dozens of rare publicity shots from Bing's TV shows, and if you like, I could start scanning a few a day and e-mail them to you, as I did a few months back. I've spent a small fortune on securing these photos, and don't care to send the originals overseas, but I'll be happy to scan them for you at full size for the book and Ron's collection. It would be great if there could be an illustration for each entry (TV appearance) in the book. Unlikely we'll have them all, but probably a small majority. Let me know if this is something you'd be interested in. I also have a large collection of Bing's TV appearances, and have a good knowledge of many of them, so if there's a question in that respect, I may be able to help.

Incidentally, the photo of Rosemary Clooney & Bing used in the review of her book GIRL SINGER comes from the 2/19/66 Hollywood Palace show. I have a copy of the "bill" for the show handed out to audience members there for the taping.

Another item that caught my eye was the song "Come A Runnin". After I interviewed Bob Thompson, his son, Spenser, wrote me the following:

> *"I may have found a totally unknown Bing song penned by Bob Thompson, called 'Come A Runnin', for an unsuccessful TV pilot where Bing would play a Palm Springs doctor. It's a Johnny Cash style romp and it's groovy. Let me know if you want it. No luck on 'Sentimental'. Dad says it's not there but I will look as he may have forgotten. My appreciation of Bing grows, he really could sing any kind of popular song with great ease."*

The 'Sentimental' he refers to is the 1962 sing-a-long LP Bing recorded for Project "On the Sentimental Side" that was never released. He couldn't find it in his Dad's master tapes. But Spenser did send me a tape of "Come a Runnin". The song, however, was not sung by Bing, but by a much younger vocalist, sounding almost like Guy Mitchell or someone similar. Unfortunately this POSITIVELY was NOT Bing! Perhaps it was a demonstration recording made for Bing to hear prior to his recording it.

Again, congrats on the first 50. Here's to 50 more! *(Editor: Needless to say, I accepted Greg's kind offer of help and he has sent me over 80 magnificent photos of Bing on television which will tie in perfectly with Lionel's TV book which is steadily nearing completion. I also obtained a copy of 'Come A Runnin' and can confirm Greg's view.)*

Arne Fogel, Minnesota, USA

The current issue of BING is, as usual, just beautiful. I caught a couple of errors in Celluloid Crosby that I'm sure will have been brought to your attention by now, but just in case, here goes:

1. The song "Bing Crosby" was NOT written by Van Dyke Parks, although "archived" by him in one of his albums. It was written by a calypso singer called "The Lion" and recorded by him way back in the 40s. I wish I could be more specific, but I know I've heard the original

recording someplace, perhaps on the BBC 15-part documentary from 1973..... Anyway, the origin of the song is fully explained in some Bing literature I've acquired over the years, once again I can't remember where just now.

2. Frank Loesser had nothing to do with "Finian's Rainbow", the score for that play having been written by Burton Lane and Yip Harburg.

Thanks for the great magazine, and keep up the great work!

(Editor: Our thanks to Arne for pointing out these slips and in fact the song 'Bing Crosby' is, I think, the calypso played by John Martin at the Leeds meeting last year. I didn't put two and two together until Arne mentioned 'The Lion'.)

Bill Wesley, 28 New Place Gardens, Upminster, Essex RM14 3DQ

Most people can remember where they were on 14th of October 1977 when the world heard that Bing had died. What a blow that was!

Many of Bing's fans will be feeling the same about our good friend Leslie Gaylor's passing in March of this year. My brother Gordon and I heard the news from a friend of mine who lives on the Isle of Wight, when he sent me an obituary notice taken from a local newspaper. That was a sad day. As we imagine this issue of BING will contain details of Leslie's great achievements over the years, we would like to pay a personal tribute.

We first met Leslie at one of the annual gatherings in the Rembrandt Hotel, London and later came to know him quite well through telephone conversations and letters. From the start we were impressed by his quiet, honest and thoughtful manner. He was indeed a very gentle gentleman whose object was, as he used to say, to "keep ol' Bing's flag flying". And that is exactly what he did. We were proud to hear him refer to us as two old friends.

It is said that truth is often stranger than fiction and, in Leslie's case, it certainly was. Who could ever have dreamed that a humble and unassuming fan would have been instrumental in furthering the great Bing Crosby's career, and encouraging him not to retire at a time when Bing was beginning to think his popularity in the UK was waning? Well, that's what Leslie did, and in his wonderful "Bing Room" he had many personal notes to prove it. Bing must have recognised in Leslie a sincere and dedicated fan and acted on his advice. But for that advice we might never have had the Palladium concerts, the Parkinson shows and the beautiful LP's recorded in London in the 1970's.

I was fortunate in being able to see Leslie's amazing collection in his "Bing Room" five times. On every visit I never ceased to marvel at his skillful presentation of Crosby memorabilia.

Leslie would often ask me if I thought he sounded 'boastful' about his connection with Bing. On the contrary, I assured him that it was quite the reverse. He should justifiably feel proud, as his association with Bing and his very personal collection were unique.

We were delighted last year to hear that Leslie had been made LIFE MEMBER OF THE ICC He was really thrilled when he heard the news. Sadly now, he has gone, and we shall all miss his "Letter from Leslie" in BING magazine.

Thank you Leslie, for helping to "KEEP OL' BING'S FLAG FLYING."

John Benstead, 83 Pynfolds Estate, Jamaica Rd., Rotherhithe, London SE16 4NU

Three years ago while on holiday on the Isle of Wight, I went into Newport and saw a postman chatting to an elderly gentleman outside the Post Office on Medina Avenue. On enquiring if he knew Mr. Gaylor he pointed to his companion saying it was him! After introducing myself, Leslie asked me if I'd like to see his Bing room and of course I was delighted at the offer. He took me across to his home and I spent a couple of hours enthralled by his stories of Bing and Bob Hope on the Shepperton set of *Road to Hong Kong* etc., etc. and listening to his tapes and looking at the Crosby memorabilia. Leslie asked if I would be interested in having some tapes made up, so we walked into town to buy some clean cassettes. He pointed out the hotel where David Jacobs and his camera crew had spent the night after interviewing him for a TV programme. I asked Les if he would join me in a jar or two and more stories followed in the bar. On returning home to London a couple of days later the five cassettes had already arrived. Leslie must have gone straight home and recorded them that very evening! I won't forget his kindness that day, a good man.

(Editor: Bill and John's letters echo the sentiments of so many members who wrote telling of their own experiences with Les and his kindness. I joined the ICC thanks to Leslie taking the trouble to respond to my letter enquiring about the club and I know many other members could say the same. Here is another of the many letters about Les...)

Michael Winspear 121 Ashington Grove, Whitley, Coventry CV34DD

I was saddened to learn of the death of Leslie Gaylor. Not only was he a stalwart of the ICC, but he was also a man who would put himself out when anyone contacted him. I only met him once when I was on holiday on the Isle of Wight. I had been with my wife to Norton Grange holiday village for a week in July of 1994 and had taken Leslie's address from one of my Bing LPs. I phoned Leslie on the off-chance and he immediately said we must go over to see him and his Bing room. He was most enthusiastic about Bing (as we all know) and we had a most enjoyable hour or so, looking over his memorabilia. Such a room! So much information! So much enthusiasm! To see that room was an experience, and I, for one, felt the emotion Leslie had for his favourite entertainer. I had been a Bing fan for many years, and had quite a few LPs, but it was Leslie who encouraged me to join the ICC. We will all miss Leslie's letters to the ICC, with his anecdotes of Bing and his promotions of anything to do with Bing's CDs.

BING 124 was another well produced and informative magazine - something we all expect now. Congratulations! About the comment from Peter Monaghan with regard to the photo of Bing and Billy de Wolfe inside the end cover of BING 123. I think that sometimes it is amusing to find that someone likes a photo just for the fun of it - keep up

the good work, Malcolm, even if some are not too keen on the end result.

I was surprised that Bert Bishop had not checked with The Crosby Collection, Part Three number 569, for his comments on 'Lily Of Laguna'. There it states that the song was written by Leslie Stuart in 1912 and "brought up to date" (when?) by Webster and Fio Rito, who added a verse and two choruses. It was interesting to note that Laguna is in Brazil and the song definitely (from the words) is of a black girl. It was sung many times by the George Mitchell Singers in the sixties and seventies in their sing-a-long shows.

Stan White, 57, Stanley Street, Rothwell. NN14 6EA

Concerning the letter from Jim Newell in connection with the piece Les Gaylor had published in the June 24, 1950 edition of PICTUREGOER with their own added comments.

Even today, I recall the feeling of disappointment I had when listening to the 78s I had purchased of the songs from the films, "The Emperor Waltz" (1948). "Top 0' The Morning" (1949) and "Riding High" (1950). It was not that they were inferior in their composition, but that removed from the scenes in the films, they were not catchy enough to become hits - or standards in the longer run. Most of the songs have been useful in more recent years as LP and CD material, when combined with other songs. It seems to me that the problem with these film songs around that time, was the story line of the films concerned, which just did not feed the songwriters Jimmy Van Heusen and Johnny Burke with scenes that enabled them to write songs which would have much wider appeal beyond the films they were written for. Van Heusen, Burke and others, did as we all know, write songs for Bing's films, which became standards. Unfortunately the story line of the above films did not really offer such scope for the songwriters.

So those are my thoughts on the subject, and I still recall clearly my disappointment at the lack of popular appeal of these songs. I wonder if my thoughts are near to those of Jim Newell ?

Thomas Hirschmann, Salzburg, Austria

First I want to thank you very much for the great Anniversary Edition of BING - I enjoyed especially the article about Kathryn Crosby's visit to London!

Some information (maybe for the next BING issue?) as it might be interesting to ICC members who own a computer. You can download a BING-screensaver for free under www.greatsingers.co.uk.

With best wishes from Salzburg.

(Editor: Many thanks Thomas for the information.)

Vernon Wesley Taylor, 4520 SE 73rd. Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97206, USA

Just a brief note to express my appreciation of the #124th. issue. It seems doubtful if there could have been a better issue in all those previous fifty years. Your long article on the meeting with Kathryn had the intimacy of a private letter while still providing the details of a good report. Both Kathryn and Alan Fisher, of course, were the focal points but all of you that were involved shone brightly.

How the years have sped away, and many of us have followed, but the BING magazine remains to remind us that much still flourishes where Bing is remembered. The South Bank program (ITV) may have brought little that was new but it was nonetheless a fine show and those who brought it off are to be congratulated, especially George O'Reilly and the others who labored so valiantly to get Kathryn aboard. The sound was bright, which is not so usual in a television broadcast, and the pace was consistent....

....If the wide world could read BING 124 (or any of its predecessors) it is certain that Bing's music would be back in a flash, with half a dozen imitators leading the parade.

Charles S. Chapman, 76 Chick St., Roselands 2196, New South Wales, Australia

In the year 1947, I was working in the city of Sydney, Australia and often in my lunch hour, I would browse through the second hand record shops in search of old New Orleans jazz type records, and of course any of Bing's.

One day I came across a record of Paul Whiteman's 'Muddy Water'. It was a Canadian Victor 20508-A. At this time I was unaware of Bing's early recordings with the Whiteman band, but as it was only sixpence I bought it.

On reaching home, I put the disc on my old wind-up gramophone and after hearing about two bars, I took it off the turntable and tossed into the back of my record cabinet.

About six months later, some friends and myself were having a few drinks and playing records when one of them asked me if I had any recordings of the twenties. For a joke I put on 'Muddy Water' and was about to stop the gramophone when someone said "Don't take it off, play it right through." When at last it came to the vocal, it was of course Bing!

When the record finished, I cleaned it within an inch of its life and it now resides in a glass case, prominently displayed in my Bing room.

May Bing's voice be heard for many years to come.

Jason Whiton, The Putney School, Putney, VT 05346, USA

I don't know if Wig mentioned it, but I have written a children's picture book manuscript loosely based on Bing's early career. It features Bing as a boy who loves to sing, who disappears right before the show. Mildred, Bix, Basie and Louis look hi and low and get him back just in time. It's meant to be playful and fun. I'm hoping a publisher will pick it up. I'll let you know when it develops further.

(Editor: I have had some interesting e-mail exchanges with Jason who works as an artist and teacher specializing in Photography and Japanese Studies. He has kindly provided us with the rare advert featuring Bing which is on page 55 and also he is investigating the possibility of publishing a book of Bing's sheet music. We wish him well with his various projects.)

LIONEL'S LINES

"ROBIN AND ROSE'S"

Recently, I've been having trouble with shops and I do not refer to the, "I was there, where were you?" multiple choice dilemmas that derive from having said, "I'll meet you outside the Mobile Phone shop in the High Street".

If you haven't already had personal experience, I am here to warn you of those establishments which are grandly suffixed with a certain word - "PC World", "Furniture World", "Garden World", "Carpet World", "Office World" etc., etc. The word "World" has been cunningly appropriated to induce you into believing that not only are they "world" class but also are offering global quantities of goods within their specific domain. Well, step through their automatic doors, my friends and you've got trouble, right there in Shopping City, with a capital "T" and that rhymes with "B" and that stands for "bunk".

Nothing displayed on the shelves can be purchased. These stores are no more than living catalogues, staffed by moon-faced assistants, bereft of any vital signs, who will advise you that the packet of wet-wipes that you require will take between seven and ten days, to come from "the warehouse".

Fifty years ago, I remember seeing an "artist's impression" of what is now, laughingly called, a "Retail Park". His sketch consisted of two rows of egg-shaped, greenhouses, spaced along a tree-lined avenue. It would have been far more accurate had he drawn Alcatraz, surrounded by three thousand parking spaces, 80% of which were inaccessible due to selfish slobs abandoning their shopping trolleys.

This has caused my thoughts to return to "H. Rose & Son - Ironmongers & General Provisions". Mr. Rose was of florid complexion, white-haired, celluloid collared, black tied with a knee-length, grey coat and a slight limp, claimed to be a legacy from World War I. There were those, who darkly suggested that the impediment was the result of an accident involving a petrified bag of cement that was used to prop open the shop door on warm summer days and which still bore the legend, "Damaged Stock 1/3d".

Any slight breeze caused by opening the door would set up a tinny symphony from the assorted pots and pans, watering cans, washboards and coal hods dangling from the ceiling and the blended aromas of turpentine, beeswax, ripe cheese, carbolic soap and fresh sawdust still linger in my olfactory memory bank. (The sawdust was sprinkled on the floorboards, in lieu of synthetic marble cladding and provided the ideal medium for a lad to carve his initials with the toe of a worn plimsoll).

In those days, there was little need for any concentrated effort at re-cycling. You took your own vinegar bottle to be re-filled from a reeking barrel and a cracked cup with no handle, for a pennyworth of mustard pickle from an earthenware jar. Disconcertingly, after this event, Mr. Rose would lick the wooden ladle before returning it to the pot. Packaging was kept to a minimum. Two ounces of tintacks (to fix that annoying flap of linoleum in the hall) would be skilfully encased in a cone of newspaper, as would dried peas, currants, mothballs, broken biscuits or, indeed, anything from bulk stock.

It would be wrong to use that hackneyed expression, "an Aladdin's Cave" because, if I remember correctly, Aladdin's Cave held nothing but a rotten old lamp and it was the genie who did the business but Rose's sold everything from Apples to "Zog-It-Off" paint cleaner. Difficult requests might entail Mr. Rose disappearing to the cellar, where he could be heard grunting and shifting crates and boxes. If this failed, he would retire to ransack his living accommodation at the rear of shop, for the elusive item and one feared that he might be snatching the food from the mouths of his wife and children, to effect a sale.

Nevertheless, I can assure you that today's super stores will never match Mr. Rose's little shop, for I have hunted, in vain, through Safeway, for Zebo grate polish. Scoured B & Q from stem to stern, in search of hurricane lamp wicks and I am still in urgent need of a card of Briton's Mangle-Proof Rubber Buttons for my high-necked winter underwear.

In the meantime, it has occurred to me that in my occasional series on the poets of popular song, I have neglected a man who is regarded as second only to Mack Gordon as Hollywood's most successful lyricist and who contributed songs to more than 115 motion pictures.

Leo Robin was born in Pittsburgh in 1895 and without question, his songs had a most profound influence on the early film career of Bing Crosby. During his partnership with Ralph Rainger, Robin had this to say, "We used to write all sorts of different songs for Bing, because you could take a chance with him. He could put over anything, no matter whether it was low-down or fancy". I believe that, in return, Bing appeared to have a partiality for singing his lyrics.

After studying law, Leo had a succession of jobs ranging from newspaper reporter to social worker before breaking into song writing in 1925. In collaboration with Clifford Grey, he had his first big hit with Vincent Youmans', "Hallelujah!", written for the Broadway production, "Hit The Deck". He signed with Paramount in 1929 and in partnership with Richard Whiting, wrote songs for two Maurice Chevalier pictures, including the hits, "My Ideal" and "Louise" which Chevalier retained in his repertoire for the remainder of his life. Although it is highly unlikely that he would have had any choice at this early stage in his career, Bing, in his alter ego, as a "Rhythm Boy", sang "Hallelujah!" several times on Paul Whiteman's "Old Gold" and much later, in 1954, it popped up as his opening number in the General Electric series. Again, in the "Old Gold" series he sang, "Louise" and the song also became his first recording of a Robin creation. The composer's daughter, Margaret Whiting, popularly revived "My Ideal" in the 40's and hit records were made by Billy Butterfield and Jimmy Dorsey. Bing followed the trend, using it three times on Kraft and in several other radio programmes of the time but we were obliged to wait for Ken Barnes' refurbished Buddy Cole

tracks before hearing it again.

In 1932 the studio teamed him with another ex-law student, Ralph Rainger, to work on "The Big Broadcast" for which they wrote, "Here Lies Love". The song spent thirteen weeks in Variety's listing of the nation's top hits, only to be surpassed by one of those rare popular songs that starts with its highest note. There are those who claim that, "Please", ensured Crosby's future in the movies and to this I would add, I don't care what the books say - the song has got to have been a million-seller.

The new duo gained a reputation for specialising in romantic songs and it is said that, in his encounter with journalism, Robin had given advice in the lonely hearts column of the newspaper and the letters he received from the lovelorn, provided inspiration for many of his lyrics. Word has it that the two men were painstakingly thorough in their approach to scoring for motion pictures, studying the range of the singer and suiting the tempo to the scene. They attempted to ensure that a certain vowels did not land on high notes and certain consonants, on low notes. In opposition to this postulation we have the fact that they were writing songs for a dozen films a year at Paramount and often would have a song rejected from one film and interpolated into another, with a different star. To quote some examples, "Sailor Beware" was written for an unproduced film, sharing the same name, (later to become a vehicle for Martin & Lewis, in 1951, with entirely different songs by Mack David and Jerry Livingston). The score also included, "I Can't Escape From You" (Robin/Whiting), considered for but not used in "Anything Goes" (1936). So, now we have Bing singing "Sailor Beware" and "My Heart And I" (Robin/Hollander) (Originally entitled "Am I Awake" and intended for "Rose Of The Rancho" starring John Boles!) in "Anything Goes" and catching up with "I Can't Escape From You" in "Rhythm On The Range". Too complicated? There may be more to come. Shall I go first or will you follow me?

In "She Loves Me Not", the two "R's" dared to muscle in on Gordon and Revel who had composed five new numbers (two were unused) for the picture and managed to steal the show with "Love In Bloom". The song provided Leo Robin with the first of his ten Academy Award nominations and Bing Crosby with another chart topper.

Bing sings 'Please'

Next, let me assail you with a quotation from "The Melody Lingers On" by Roy Hemming,

> *"Bing Crosby became partial to another Rainger and Robin song in "Here Is My Heart" - an elegant ballad entitled "With Every Breath I Take". He promoted it as much as he could on his weekly radio show and even revived it a couple of times in the 40's but it never caught on. Perry Como also added it to his broadcast repertory in the 40's and both Frank Sinatra and Marlene Ver Plank recorded it even later - without any wider acceptance than Bing. I've long wished its fate were otherwise, for (it) is an uncommonly worthy song."*

Although one might share the writer's regard for the piece, his references are somewhat puzzling, because although two examples have been traced to Bing's Woodbury series, only a single example appears on KMH when it appeared in one of film medleys which were regularly featured in the 1944/45 season. If you have a murky video or a long memory, you may recall that in the movie, Crosby seated at the piano, serenades Kitty Carlisle with the number. You will guess that he's not really providing his own accompaniment and in fact, this was "ghosted" by none other than, Ralph Rainger.

Bing seemed to show more affinity with two other compositions from the film, for both were included in his Musical Autobiography set and both were used in the later

years on General Electric. Not to overlook that a new version of, "June In January" was among the last songs that he recorded. The remaining song was a little something called, "Love Is Just Around The Corner" which Robin wrote with Lewis Gensler. The sheet music advocates, "Brightly (not too fast)" and Bing, willingly, complies and even though it has been recorded by a multitude of vocalists from Louis Armstrong to Harry Roy, his must be regarded as the definitive version. Connoisseurs of the witty metaphor have made much of the mixture of sophistication and vernacular in:

"But strictly between us,
You're cuter than Venus
And what's more you got arms"

Others might prefer the lines, in the second chorus which give the lie to the romantic song, by revealing the lovesick swain as a mere philanderer:

"I'm ten times as faithful as all your other men.
They all are true to no one but you
But me, I'm true to ten"

The same film provides an enigma. Was there a title song? We are aware that Bing sang a song entitled, "Here Is My Heart" with the Dorsey Brothers in 1933 but it has been firmly established that two other fellers wrote this. However, at least three works of reference claim that a title song did exist. "Lissauer's Encyclopaedia Of Popular Music In America" contains the following entry: "Here Is My Heart - Leo Robin/Ralph Rainger, 1935. From 'Here Is My Heart', starring Bing Crosby and Kitty Carlisle. Bing did not record it but his brother Bob did as vocalist with the Dorsey Brothers' Band. Also recorded by Tony Martin." Solutions, please.

In "Rhythm On The Range" the previously discarded, "I Can't Escape From You", supplied another Hit Parade entry for our hero who, in the meantime, had been plugging Robin's lyrics, written for other Paramount movies, on radio, via his Kraft programme: "Long Ago And Far Away"; "A Rendezvous With A Dream"; "Blossoms On Broadway"; "If I Should Lose You"; "Ebb Tide"; "You Took The Words Right Out Of My Heart" and "Whispers In The Dark" but recorded nary a one, although, with the exception of the first-named, they were all chart entries for other artistes. All Bing could manage to support the team, were the songs from his own movies plus "Silver On The Sage" from "The Texans" featuring Randolph Scott and "Moonlight And Shadows" (which Robin wrote with Frederick Hollander) from Dorothy Lamour's first starring opus, "The Jungle Princess". Well, a man can only do so much!

In spite of being up-staged by the Oscar winning, "Sweet Leilani", Robin and Rainger weighed in with a handful of mainly, Hawaiian-slanted ditties for "Waikiki Wedding". Determined to have their own hit in the picture, they singled out, "Sweet Is The Word For You" as the likeliest contender. Public decency prevents me from repeating Ralph Rainger's opinion of his own composition, "Blue Hawaii" which he hated yet, perversely, this turned out to be the money-spinner. Many years later, Leo Robin averred, "this was and still is, our most performed song" and of course, it was considered to

Bing sings a duet of 'June in January' with himself in 'Here Is My Heart'.

be a worthy enough landmark to be re-recorded for the Autobiography album.

"Waikiki Wedding" spawned another of those songs submitted but not used. "I Have Eyes" finally saw the light of day in "Paris Honeymoon", Robin & Rainger's last film with Bing at Paramount. It shared the honours with, "You're A Sweet Little Headache" and the whimsical "Western" number, "The Funny Old Hills". Having by now, established the benefit of a broadcast "plug", all three were heavily featured on the crooner's radio series. By this time, it will come as no surprise to you that a song was also written for this picture that didn't make the final print. Regrettably, there is no example of Bing singing, "Bluebirds In The Moonlight" which was finally interpolated into the studio's first venture into full-length animation, "Gulliver's Travels". Both Marion Hutton with Glenn Miller and Mildred Bailey with Benny Goodman reached the Top Twenty with the number.

When their contracts with Paramount expired, the song-writing duo moved to Twentieth Century Fox and although their films were box office successes, they never emulated the string of hit tunes that they had previously crafted at Paramount. In 1942, Robin and Rainger were invited to meet executives in New York to discuss future productions. Leo Robin was nervous about flying and opted for the transcontinental train journey. Ralph Rainger was killed, soon after take-off when his plane collided with a military aircraft.

Leo soldiered on, combining his talents with the elite of Hollywood's composers, in the shapes of, Harold Arlen, Jerome Kern, Arthur Schwartz and Harry Warren and Bing kept singing his songs, latching on to, "A Gal In Calico", a cheery little cowboy number from "The Time The Place And The Girl". The song was the lyricist's fifth application for an Oscar and another million-seller for the singer. "Oh! But I Do" and "A Rainy Night In Rio" were also included in Warner musicals and all three enjoyed outings on Philco Radio Time.

At the following year's Academy Awards Presentation, Robin mustered two more nominations with, "This Is The Moment" from "That Lady In Ermine" starring Betty Grable and "For Every Man There's A Woman" from "Casbah", Universal's attempt to adapt a re-make of "Pepe Le Moko" as a musical. Neither could be considered as Crosby material but he did have a couple of whirls at "Hooray For Love" from the latter of two movies, first with the Rhythmaires and then with the Skylarks on Philco. In the same series he also used "Bye, Bye Baby" (including a duet with Al Jolson). Carol Channing introduced the song in one of Broadway's most successful musical comedies, "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes" which Robin wrote in collaboration with Jule Styne.

He got to write exclusively for a Crosby picture again, in an alliance with Harry Warren for the score of "Just For You". Probably impressed by the success of the previous duet with Jane Wyman of "In The Cool, Cool, Cool Of The Evening" in "Here Comes The Groom", the team came up with the big hit, "Zing A Little Zong" which shows some resemblance in both structure and rhythm. The other duet, with Ben Lessy, "On The Ten-Ten From Ten-Ten-Tennessee" carries overtones of Robin's first ever hit from 1926, "My Cutie's Due At Two To Two Today". Songs from the film came to prominence when Bing was changing sponsors, in 1951 and examples can be found in both Chesterfield and his series for General Electric.

Bing's recording of one of the last examples of Robin's work was lost to us for almost thirteen years until "Lost In Loveliness" was issued on Geoff Milne's, Ace of Hearts album, "Rare Style", in 1967.

Leo Robin died in 1984. I trust that I have been careful enough not to over-praise or be hypercritical about any of his songs, being well aware that one person's cliché is another's innovation. The tragedy is, that today, much of his output might be casually dismissed as Hollywood "schlock" and even worse, cause those who would easily recognise Berlin, Porter or Hammerstein to say, "Robin who?"

Lionel Pairpoint

(Editor: In Lionel's article in the last edition, I was interested to read about a controversial piece Bing had written in 1954 and I wanted to know more. By chance in March, I stumbled on the article itself in a clippings file maintained in the Dallas Public Library. I found the article very interesting indeed and more balanced than it had seemed from the response of the disc jockeys which Lionel highlighted for us. So with grateful thanks to LOOK magazine here is the article they printed in November 1954.)

"I never had to scream" by Bing Crosby

The Old Groaner reflects on pops, jockeys and some jobs he wants in night spots.

A journeyman sea-level baritone of my sort with as much solo time logged as I have could be expected to have a head full of ancient wisdom in re the song-singing business, all neatly packaged and ready to impart. That could reasonably be expected, indeed, if sleds or cyclotrons or banana boats were my business. But they aren't. Songs are. And songs, like horses, run wrong all the time and all over the land. I have had my money on hundreds of them. When it comes to picking hit tunes, I after selling something more than 125 million records in this racket, am as inept as a brand new boy soprano. I picked *All through The Day,* which I think Jerome Kern wrote. Nothing - but nothing at all - happened. I couldn't throw the records away. I thought *Home Cooking* would be big. Did nothing. I thought *More I Cannot Wish* You from *Guys and Dolls* would be a smash. Died. It turns out that other people picked the tunes for just about all the winners I've had. The few I picked were welded to the post. And there they stayed.

I confess these failures freely, and to make a point. Let it first be granted by all reasonable men that the styles in popular music change so fast it's impossible to keep up with them. I don't know what the public is going to buy today or next year. Anybody who tells you he knows is conning you and conning himself.

Now this music pundit, this sage of songdom, may

turn down songs which become very big hits, and choose to work his head off on others which turn out to be colossal eggs. He may have three good years, picking a steady flow of hits and in the next decade, he won't be able to pick his mother out of a crowd of Senegambians. I would say, dear choir, success in the hit record making business is about 75% luck, 15% hustle and 10% talent.

In my case, it can be argued - and I'll argue it - that neither the talent nor the hustle runs that high, and that the luck runs higher. There just happens to be at large now one of the fattest phonograph albums you ever did see, and it makes the point perfectly, and personally too. Now on the cover, this album has a title which is - entirely - *Bing.* That title makes complete sense because, no matter where you begin, or give up, listening to the stack of plastic within, you get banged about the head and ears by me. But by cunning arrangement - conceived, perhaps in despair by the Decca Records people, who want to sell these things now that they've gone this far - gentle spirits such as Mary Martin, Judy Garland, Jane Wyman, Jack Teagarden, Louis Armstrong and the late and wondrous Al Jolson are teamed with a party of one in places along the way. They are "assisting artists" in the patois of Tin Pan Alley, and they assist me in songs the way gin assists vermouth in martinis.

Twenty Years of Hits

The first of the numbers in there is *Muddy Water,* the second is *Mississippi Mud.* And after that earthy opening, there follow such antiquities as *Please, Learn to Croon, Down the Old Ox Road, Love in Bloom, June in January* and *Small Fry.* Eighty nine (no more, no less) songs after it starts, this compendium pants to a close with *Gone Fishin', In the Cool, Cool, Cool of the Evening and Y'All Come.* What it is, to come right out with it, is an album full of the hits I've had in the last twenty years.

Clear out of your head, if you will, the name, face and slender figure of the guy who keeps recurring and recurring and recurring in this album, which can't be played straight through in a minute under four hours. Forget about him, if only for the moment. Consider instead those songs. Are their equals to he heard in the hits holding the top this week? I think not, but you think it your way.

Yet the songs are only part of the business. The singers are only part of it too, of course, but they've descended on the public in such packs since I first took office that I can't tell them apart any more. Style or manner or some such commodity should make each one of them distinguishable from all the others, but I don't hear it that way.

Bix Beiderbecke and I roomed together when we were with the old Paul Whiteman band, and I think some of his taste in these matters rubbed off on me vocally. Good musicians like Bix stood out then. Now there are dozens of them. Take Perry Como, for one. Not many guys sing as well as he does. Good quality. good-enough range - very nice fellow. And I think Frank Sinatra is singing well again too. Singing great, in fact. The new kids? Well, there's Eddie Fisher. He's strong on ballads, but rhythm songs don't seem too me to be his dish. But of all the young kids, he has had the most astute management. Harry Akst, the piano man who worked with Jolson for ages, works with Fisher now, and it shows. I don't mean that Fisher sings like Jolson. What I mean is that Fisher may some day sing as well as Jolson.

The whole music business has shaken out and changed a lot - but not all for the better, by any fair or foul means. There are good singers all over the place, and the competition's so tough that to get a hit record, the recording companies will resort to anything, even to bop, which I've applied myself to and which eludes me completely. But one trouble I think I see is that the record companies are pretty reluctant nowadays to try to go with a simple arrangement of a good song. I have the deepest sympathy for a singer trying to make his way through one of those wildly contrived melanges while the accompaniment behind him is scooting all over the place. So many gimmicks, so little music. I guess I should be thankful for one thing at least in the records I've made. I've never had to scream. And I'm a guy who can listen to anything that's music and get my kicks. Once Chaliapin was a guest on our radio show and he left me limp when he sang. Yet Mugsy Spanier or Nat Cole can do the same thing to me. Yes, I really get my jollies out of music. I can get up in the morning depressed, turn on the radio, catch a good Dixieland beat rolling along and everything's rosy again. A Fats Waller disc can make me positively jovial. Now there's a pianist whose every phrase was laced with taste and good humor. Teddy Wilson's that dependable today, and he doesn't sing - which is probably a good idea.

There are, I feel, too many good singers and not enough good songs to go around. Certainly, we have good writers, but the public isn't buying what they're writing - pretty frustrating for some of the gifted people in ASCAP.

"I Envy Song Writers"

If I had to do it all over again, I'd study harmony and composition along the way, so I could put down a melody when one I liked ran through my head. And often they do. Sometimes they sound good to me. But I fear that if I went to one of my piano playing pals - fellows like Buddy Cole or Joe Lilley - hummed the tune and asked them to get it down on paper for me, they'd give me the halibut eye and I'd back away discountenanced. Honestly. what I do is envy song writers more than anybody. I would have rather written a song like *Begin the Beguine* than win six straight pennants with the Pittsburgh Pirates, which is about the most desirable and unattainable thing I can think of just now.

But there are some attainable things I better get on top of, pretty soon too. I think the best of the singers are often missing the boat the public's aboard by not getting into small clubs and singing to human beings instead of to TV cameramen, record company vice-presidents and that sort. I'd like to get out to an intimate room somewhere, work from nine to twelve and sing what I please. I'd get backed up by a seven or eight piece combo, which I'd select, and I'd probably charge the patrons nothing. That way I'd eliminate the beefs. The way I see it, that refresher course would get me back *au courant* musically and vocally. And I'm sure some arrangements, or treatments, would develop to produce a few hits.

The way the game is played now, it's the disc jockeys - as much as, or more than, the singers - who produce the hits. A young singer starting out now has to woo them because they run the business. I guess If were starting out again, I'd go about it that way too, but I'm not sure. Some of them bother me. I really believe that if a disc jockey is going to set himself up as a judge he should have some real knowledge of what he's about. It's apparent that many who speak in the accents of authority are all accent and no authority. By playing and replaying a song which has nothing but nuisance value, a large nuisance and a lot of sales can be brought about. But in the long run, that practice will give this business a short haul and a bad shake.

A song, after all, can be a serious thing, but I don't hear many of them made that way lately. When I do, something happens, and I think whatever that is isn't happening often enough. Sometimes when I'm driving along, or sitting at home, I'll hear a melody that's right and my eyes fill with tears. It's incredible even to me, but it happens. I wish the songs were around to make it happen more often. Songs should be that good.

It seems to me some of the songs Decca picked out for the album are made that way. Numbers such as *Sweet and Lovely, Love Thy Neighbor* and *After Sundown* are so good that they've even survived my assaults on them. I've done them without doing them in, and singers have sung them without blowing them to pieces. No screams. No honks. Just words and music which relate to one another. They sold records too.

In that respect, it might be a gentle reminder to the parties responsible for the tuneless trend that seems to be the coming - and I hope, the going - vogue. In another respect, I think the album is going to do me a lot of good around the house. My kids are always telling me about some singer or other selling a million records. They expect me to find this quite remarkable. I have the impression that they don't think I have ever racked up that total. And they're a little untouched by my way with a tune too - no way for boys to get along in my house. It's got to the stage now that I can't stay in the room with them when they hear some radio disc jockey appraise one of my records before (as the jockeys say) "spinning it"! What they do when they hear me locked in mortal combat with a high note or two when he does play it is unwarranted. After all, I am their father. When I have them assembled some day soon, I'll chain them to the chairs and play *Bing* straight through for them. I'll introduce them to their old man as a boy, and to some good songs too.

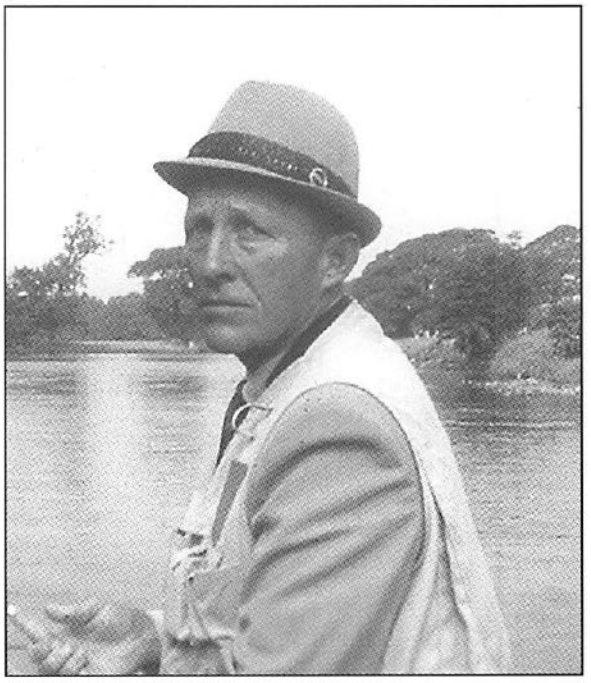
Reading this over, I realise it sounds as if I'm living in the past - one of those old gaffers who don't think Willie Mays is as good as DiMaggio, or that Marciano could have handled Joe Louis when the Brown Bomber was right.

The opinions I've expressed are certainly my own. It's apparent nobody else wants them, because records are selling better than ever. So, I'm wrong again. But I'll give you a pretty good fight on DiMaggio vs. Mays or Louis vs. Marciano. I don't know much about songs, but I'm hell on baseball and boxing.

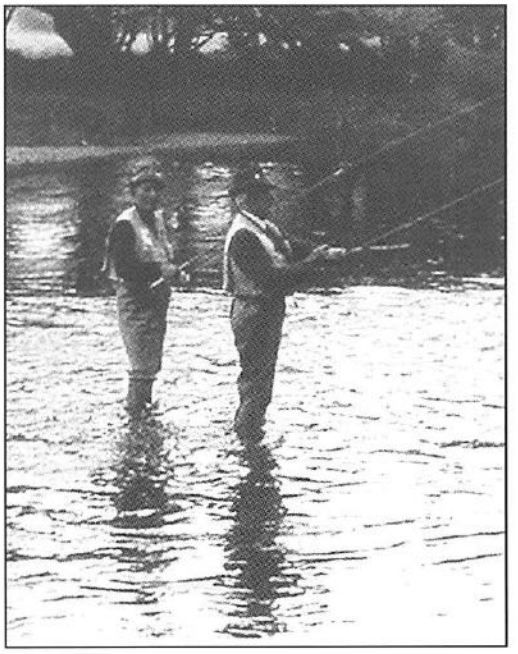
Bing Crosby

GONE FISHIN'

In late August and early September 1966, Bing was at Cockermouth in Cumbria to film a programme on salmon fishing as part of the American Sportsman series for ABC-TV. The river was somewhat low and Bing fished for three days before actually catching a salmon! He and his wife Kathryn stayed at the Trout Hotel where they were visited by a party of ICC members. The stretch of water on the River Derwent which Bing fished belonged to Cockermouth Castle and the housekeepers there, Mr. and Mrs. Park, met the Crosbys and took a number of colour photos of them. The Parks' grand-daughter, Mrs. L. Stephenson-Winder, has very kindly made the photos available to us and we have great pleasure in reproducing them below.



Bing waits for salmon



Above: Bing (left) fishing with Egremont Estates' Fishing Manager, Bill Sinclair

Kathryn Crosby with Mrs. Park at Cockermouth Castle

Bimg looks pensive whilst Bill Sinclair considers tactics

By coincidence, I also heard from George Patmore on the same subject and George wrote:

> "My wife, Marie and I, have just returned from a short holiday in the Lake District, an area not well known to us. We went to Cockermouth so obviously had to take the opportunity to call in at the Trout Hotel for a not so swift, half....a very nice, smart and very comfortable hotel, backing on to the River Derwent. The brochure declares "Such famous names as Bing Crosby have enjoyed the comforts and hospitality of the hotel in the past."
>
> In the bar immediately just inside the doors to the room, on the wall are, to the left, a nice photo of Bing holding in his left hand a large salmon and in his right hand a fishing rod, pipe in mouth. To the right, another good photo of Bing smiling with the (assumed) proprietor of the hotel. The signed photo acknowledges a pleasant stay. With this photo, there is also a hand-written menu which is headed by a short 'poem' under which Bing has put his signature The poem reads as follows:
>
> *Lord give me the luck*
> *to catch a fish so large*
> *that even I in talking of it afterwards*
> *may never need to lie.*
>
> The entrance to the hotel is at the centre rear of the building and the original main entrance is at the centre front and to the left of this doorway, on the outside of the building is a copy of the Bing with the fish photo. Although the photo is enclosed in a weather proof frame it is looking a little faded."

Our thanks to Mrs. Stephenson-Winder and to George Patmore for this reminder of a memorable visit by Bing to our shores.

ONCE IN A WHILE

The section of the magazine covering the obituaries of those connected with Bing.

Douglas Fairbanks, Jr - died in May at the good age of 90. The son of legendary silent film star, Douglas Fairbanks, he originally did not want to enter show business but tempted by a film offer from Paramount, he began acting in films in the 1920s. Marriage to Joan Crawford in 1929 raised his profile and he went on to have a featured role in 'Little Caesar' in 1931. He was regularly in demand in Hollywood through the 1930s and probably his best screen performance was in 'The Prisoner of Zenda' in 1937. Roles in 'Gunga Din' (1939), 'The Corsican Brothers' (1942) and 'Sinbad the Sailor' (1947) were notable successes too. Fairbanks cultivated wide interests outside show business and virtually gave up his film career at the end of the 1940s. Occasional stage appearances and TV work continued for the rest of his life however. During the war, he served with distinction in the American navy, rising to the rank of captain and becoming one of the most decorated of all Hollywood actors. He was an admirer of the young Bing Crosby having seen him at the Cocoanut Grove originally and there is evidence that they socialised together on occasion. Douglas appeared on the Kraft Music Hall with Bing on no less than four occasions in 1937/8. He was also a guest with Bing on Perry Como's 'Supper Club' radio programme on April 13, 1950 and we reproduce a photo of the occasion below. Probably British ICC members will consider his main connection with Bing as being the narrator of the BBC's marvellous 15 part series on Bing's life which was broadcast in the 1970s.

Before Bing sailed from New York on the Queen Elizabeth, he dropped by NBC to do a guest shot on the Perry Como show. Also on hand were Doug Fairbanks, Jr., musical director Mitchell Ayers. The boys teamed for a song and a baseball skit.

Barry Ulanov - a professor and author or translator of nearly 50 books died on April 30. He was 82. Barry Ulanov is known to Crosby followers as the author of 'The Incredible Crosby', one of the best books about Bing ever. Ulanov became the editor of Metronome in 1939 and in this role he added a focus on jazz, bebop and black performers to the magazine. In the 1940s, he planned a trilogy of books on the figures he considered most important in American popular music: Duke Ellington, Bing and Louis Armstrong. The Ellington biography was published in 1946 and the Crosby book two years later. Sadly the Armstrong book was never written. From 1951 onwards when he converted to Catholicism, much of Ulanov's writing and teaching involved religion. He taught in the English department at Princeton from 1951 to 1953 and at Barnard College from 1953 to 1988.

Bill Colleran, 77, television producer and director probably best known for his work on "The Judy Garland Show" died on June 15 of a stroke at the Motion Picture and Television Fund Hospital in Woodland Hills. Colleran began in television in 1952 as associate director of the Emmy-winning "Your Hit Parade," a weekly show that featured recording artists performing popular songs. He went on to other musical variety shows, including specials for ABC-TV starring Bing, Frank Sinatra and Debbie Reynolds. He was the director of Bing's specials broadcast on March 2 and September 29, 1959 and of the Frank Sinatra Timex Show on which Bing guested on October 19, 1959. He met and married actress Lee Remick during that period and had two children, but he and Remick later divorced. After recovering from a serious auto accident in 1960, Colleran took over as executive producer of "The Judy Garland Show" in 1963 and helped turn the hour-long variety program into a pure concert show.

Leslie Gaylor - An Obituary

Both Jim Reilly and Stan White have penned tributes to Leslie Gaylor and first we hear from Jim.

Early on the morning of Sunday 19th March I received a telephone call from Leslie's daughter Paulette, telling me that my friend and Crosby man extraordinaire had passed away shortly after midnight. Les, who was 79 years old, died in St Mary's hospital Newport, Isle of Wight from pneumonia after a short illness. In fact I had seen him on the Tuesday before and he was admitted to hospital on the Wednesday. My sincere condolences go out to his family at their sad loss.

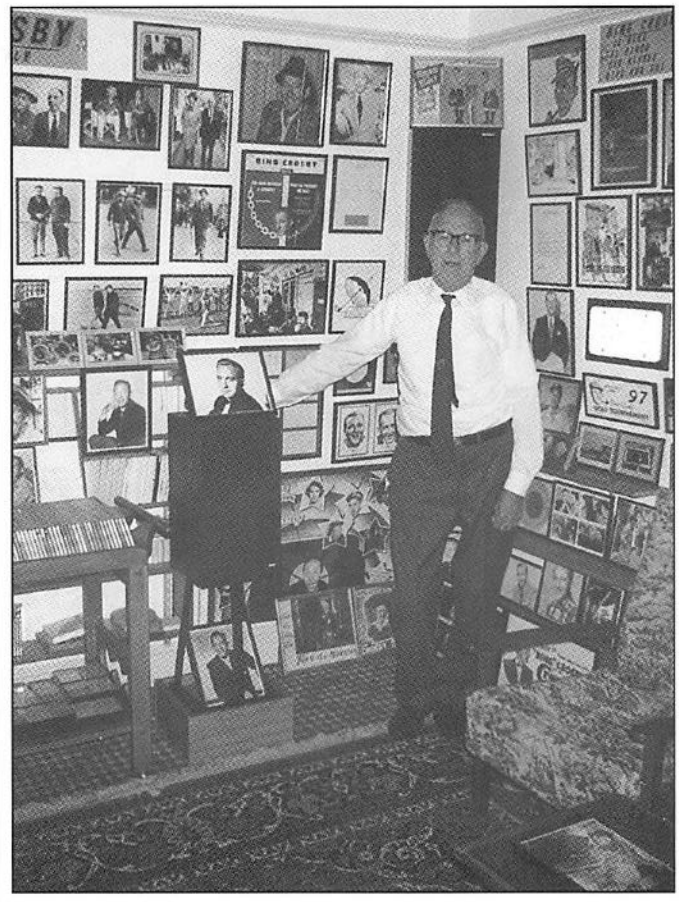
On that last visit to Leslie there was no clue as to what was sadly to come to pass; he was in good spirits and was enthusing about the local radio station that played his beloved Bing at regular intervals during their one-month temporary licence. I had arranged to visit the studios of Angel Radio that same day and Les asked me to take them a donation from him as a measure of his support. I went to the studio and they thanked Leslie for his donation and then played "If You Love Me" - from the "Memories" CD as I asked them to dedicate a song to Leslie from this CD (most members will know that Les had helped me along with Ernest Sutkowski and Stan White to compile it).

Leslie Gaylor was known throughout the Crosby world as Bing's Number One Fan, a title he thoroughly deserved and earned over his many years promoting the Crosby cause. He had first heard Bing in the early Thirties and from that time became a dedicated Bing man. Les told me that he met with Bing on thirty separate occasions and he found it hard to believe that he "a mere factory worker" (his words not mine) could become a friend of the great Bing Crosby. It is not often that a fan can have an influence on a star's career, but Leslie certainly did and he had Bing's own words to support this claim. He played a part in getting Bing to appear on the Parkinson Shows and was instrumental in Bing meeting and working with Ken Barnes.

Leslie was a founder member of the Bing Crosby Society in 1950 and has been the most enthusiastic member we have ever had. He was responsible for countless members joining the ICC. I know that many people will miss him throughout the world as they will miss his regular contribution to the pages of BING with his "Letter From Leslie" column. Over the years that I knew him he never spoke an unkind word about anyone and looked to see the good in all. He would give up his time to help anyone, particularly if they shared his passion for Bing and would spend many hours recording tapes for complete strangers.

I doubt if there is a radio presenter of our type of music who did not know of Leslie and his tireless promotion of Bing Crosby. Stan White has more to say on this subject but it is a measure of Leslie's success in his endeavours that Desmond Carrington announced his sad passing on his national BBC Radio2 programme of the 19th March. After playing a Bing record he said "And hearing Bing, I know all my broadcasting colleagues will be as sorry as I am to learn of the death yesterday of Leslie Gaylor who championed Bing in all his works over many years and who was an invaluable help to so many programmes like this one. Thank you Leslie and fond memories". Hubert Gregg also paid a nice tribute to Leslie on his BBC Radio 2 programme of 16 June.

Many record companies were also aware of Leslie and he put together CDs for Pickwick and MCA. He was responsible for my own involvement with MCA, which resulted in Bing CDs being produced, and I will ever be grateful to Leslie for this.



Leslie enjoyed Bing's radio performances and thought that Bing was at his best and most relaxed when on the radio, although he enthused over everything Bing did. Some years ago Leslie put together a series of tapes for hospital radio that were made up mainly from radio material. The late broadcaster Alan Dell played many

radio tracks that Leslie provided for his 'Sounds Easy' radio programme. It gave Leslie great pleasure knowing Alan's listeners enjoyed hearing Bing's radio songs.

Leslie wrote to many newspapers and had many articles written about his support for Bing. He took a quiet delight at getting plugs for Bing whenever he could. His marvellous Bing room was seen at regular intervals on local television as well as nationally and I can recall that he appeared on a David Jacobs "Prime Time" programme. His room was like a shrine to Bing and contained much Bing memorabilia, including cheques that Bing sent him, many autographed photographs and records, a cap and pair of glasses that belonged to Bing and much much more. He had many Bing fans visit him and it gave him great pleasure showing them around his pride and joy.

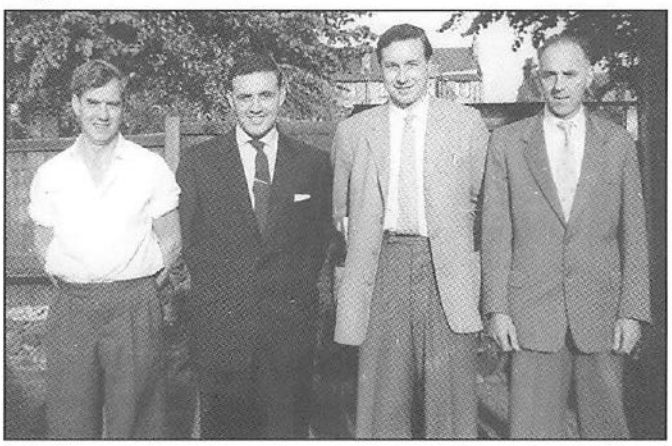
We will never again see a man so devoted to the cause of promoting Bing so enthusiastically and the Crosby world has lost Bing's Number One Fan. I have lost a friend. I would like to quote a comment made by Ken Barnes at the time of Leslie's passing "I would say that the ICC has lost its most revered member". I am sure that everyone will agree that his passing is a great loss to the ICC.

Phil Clarke and I represented the ICC at Leslie's funeral and I was honoured to be asked to say a few words during the service. The ICC sent a wreath with predominately Blue and Gold flowers.

Jim Reilly

Now we hear from Stan White

Back in the mid-1950s, the weekly newspaper "Radio Review" had a lively reader's letter page, and often, letters would be published concerning Bing Crosby, some for and some against. It was a letter from Co-President Frank Murphy in 1955 who first put me in touch with The British Crosby Society. Once my name appeared in the newsletter "Crosby Post", it was not long before Les Gaylor made contact with me.



(L to R) Jack Manners, Frank Murphy, Stan White and Leslie Gaylor

I first met Leslie at a Crosby Society meeting which was held at the home of Jack Manners in London, that was about 1960. Quite a number of well known names attended including Bob and Vera Roberts, Frank Murphy, Fred Reynolds etc. Les was most anxious to meet me at this gathering, because the American guitar-player Johnny Cucci, had sent me some Decca 78s which included a very rare take Les wanted. After all this time I can't now recall the title but suffice it to say that Les was delighted when I made a gift of it to him. Photographs were taken at the meeting and one of these is reproduced below.

I next met with Les in 1961 at the Wembley Television Studios when Bing was making his Christmas TV show with Dave King, Marion Ryan, Terry Thomas, Shirley Bassey, Bob Hope and others.

For a number of years Les and I had been sending LPs to various radio presenters to help them play difficult to find Bing tracks requested by their listeners. Les would help out with songs I didn't have spare copies of and vice versa. This continued for many years with each of us sending LPs to radio presenters. Somewhere along the way Leslie found out that Ernest Sutkowski was providing a similar service in America and after making contact with Ernest we sort of pooled our efforts. Les and Maggie Ryan made contact and eventually Maggie joined the team. Our efforts in supplying LPs and CDs really worked and Alan Dell appreciated the help Les gave him with his featured Bing slot. The work that Les started continues today which can be seen by reference to Bert Bishop's column.

Les contacted me in the early 1970s to obtain taped copies of every radio programme I had featuring Bing with Buddy Cole & his Trio / Quartet. He needed this material urgently in order that he could approach Ken Barnes about making use of the many songs Bing and Buddy recorded together for radio. I remember thinking at the time that it seemed a long shot, but if anybody could pull the strings in the right direction, it would be Leslie. Certainly Les was able to make Ken aware of all those songs recorded for radio and this eventually led to some 70 titles being released with the addition of the Pete Moore Orchestra. Of course Les was involved in so many activities aimed at promoting Bing, and most of them met with success.

I will miss Les, his chirpy phone calls full of excitement whenever a new Bing CD arrived, and even singing sometimes to illustrate a point. He would have been pleased that Desmond Carrington announced his passing to the whole country in his programme of March 19th. Les was grateful to Desmond for the continuation of the Bing spot in his programmes, which Desmond picked up from David Jacobs after "Sounds Easy" ended; David having taken over the programme after the death of Alan Dell. Alan had started the weekly Bing spot upon the suggestion of Leslie.

So now Les has gone to join Bing, and it would be nice to think that they are all enjoying some great music together, Les, Bing, John Scott, Buddy Cole et al.

Stan White

On learning of Leslie's passing Kathryn Crosby kindly sent the following note to his daughter (reproduced here with her kind permission).

Dear Paulette,
I was so sorry to learn of the death of your father. Bing thought highly of him, and was very grateful for his staunch support over the years. I was hoping to see Leslie before Christmas when I was in London. I learnt of this sad event not only from Alan Fisher, but from George O'Reilly, Malcolm Macfarlane, and my daughter Mary (who has a 9 month old son). Your father was very special. I pray for him and for you. love, Kathryn Crosby

Bert Bishop's BING ON THE BOX

The first film title in the following list says it all. No less than fourteen Bing movies with a total of forty-eight screenings in the four months since we last collated this column rivalling the output of our Stateside cousins, as reported by Wig Wiggins. That's entertainment indeed! With the digital services of TCM and Carlton, and Sky Cinema seventy-five per cent digital, it would seem that our kind of flicks are in good hands for the foreseeable future. The downside, though, is the expense and possible hassle of converting existing systems. Just when you think you've got it sorted they go and move the goal-posts. I originally owned a cylinder gramophone with fragile tubes featuring the likes of Florrie Ford, George Robey and Dame Nellie Melba but, I hasten to add, no Crosby (Though Sir George did make a name for himself in 'The Bing Boys'!) Since when we've trod a path littered with obsolescent technology of both sound and vision that only dedicated collectors look back upon and cling to with loving affection. Whence the future? Virtual reality? Maybe we'll all be able to end up playing bit parts in our favourite movie. Now there's a thought!

MARCH

THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT	TCM (Turner Classic Movies) 10th
HIGH SOCIETY	TCM 14th
LET'S MAKE LOVE	C4 1st

APRIL

HIGH SOCIETY	TCM 8th
ROAD TO BALI	C4 11th
ROAD TO RIO	C4 12th
ROAD TO SINGAPORE	Sky Cinema twice 18th
THE COUNTRY GIRL	Sky Cinema twice 18th
THE BELLS OF ST MARY'S	Carlton 21st

MAY

A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT	Sky Cinema twice on 2nd & 14th
THE COUNTRY GIRL	Sky Cinema 2nd & 25th
ROAD TO ZANZIBAR	Sky Cinema twice 5th
RIDING HIGH	Sky Cinema 10th & 16th
RIDING HIGH	Sky Cinema digital twice 22nd
ROBIN & THE 7 HOODS	Sky Cinema twice 18th & 29th

Fathers O'Malley and Fitzgibbon debate a point.

ROBIN & THE 7 HOODS	Sky Cinema digital	twice	23rd
HIGH SOCIETY	TCM		22nd
THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT	TCM		22nd

JUNE

ROBIN & THE 7 HOODS	Sky Cinema		4th
ROAD TO SINGAPORE	Sky Cinema	twice	12th
GOING MY WAY	Sky Cinema	twice	13th
A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT	Sky Cinema	twice	14th
A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT	Sky Cinema digital	twice	24th
RIDING HIGH	Sky Cinema	twice	15th
RIDING HIGH	Sky Cinema digital	twice	23rd
THE COUNTRY GIRL	Sky Cinema	twice	16th
THE COUNTRY GIRL	Sky Cinema digital		22nd
HIGH SOCIETY	TCM		27th
HOLIDAY INN	Carlton	twice	29th

With the recent release on video of Bing's Oscar winning picture, GOING MY WAY, the satellite screening takes on a lesser significance for us dedicated fans. Nonetheless, it's encouraging to know that there is continuing recognition for this heart-warming tale of faith, dedication and moral principles. Almost underplaying his starring role, Bing gives a believable performance within the generally recognised concept of Hollywood story telling. Usually, to be awarded an Oscar, performers have to act their socks off and/or be a part of the Hollywood 'luvvie' network. There have, of course, been some fine performances from that fraternity over the years, but from the moment Bing strolled into camera shot this was our man in an entirely different occupation. Not a singer, not an actor, just Harry Lillis Crosby - priest. There's the difference. We knew that everybody else in the film was acting, and it was obvious. Some more professionally skilled than others of course. Barry Fitzgerald was an absolute gem, whereas Jean Heather and James Brown as the young lovers were very minor league; and most of the rest of the cast, barring opera star Rise Stevens, were typecast character actors just doing what they were good at. Champagne moments for me are Tony Scaponi giving Herman a right going over to ensure that the latter's bass voice wasn't going to be lost to the choir; the two, touching scenes in Father Fitzgibbon's sleeping quarters (totally at variance with today's 'bedroom scenes') and Jenny Linden suddenly discovering that Chuck O'Malley had, in her absence, become Father O'Malley. Also it was good to hear again Bing's far superior rendition of "The Day After Forever" as opposed to his lacklustre commercial recording of that Burke and Van Heusen ballad. Whilst I can never resist exclaiming 'holy smoke!' at the news of the fire at St. Dominic's such flippancy may be excused by the recognition of one of the most telling philosophical truths ever to come out of a film: 'When I was eighteen I thought my father was pretty dumb. When I got to be twenty-one I was amazed how much he'd learned in three years', exclaims Father O'Malley to the errant Carol James. Bing delivering this simple, condensed homily with a sincerity typical of his entire performance. This was highlighted again later in the film as Father O'Malley encourages Ted Haines Jnr. and young Carol to take a fresh look at life with his understated, musical sermon, "Going My Way". As Father Chuck departs Ted turns to Carol and says of their parish priest; 'He's quite a fella.' A quiet recognition of both the character and, we feel, the performer playing the part.

The same might also have been said about our late, lamented friend Leslie Gaylor. Many have been the tributes on air in acknowledgement of his contribution to the promotion and subsequent memory of Bing. Elsewhere in this issue a fitting obituary appears, but it was gratifying that record programme presenters felt it appropriate to broadcast their sadness at the news of Leslie's passing and play a Bing track or two by way of a musical tribute. All will unfold as the column proceeds.

MYSTERY MAN

It's a strange reflection of human nature that most of us feel a compulsion to air our knowledge in a competitive manner be it with Trivial Pursuit, crosswords, on game shows, pub quizzes or, in recent times, the most compulsive of all, Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?. (This despite the fact that neither Celeste Holm nor Frank Sinatra were interested in wealthy opulence - wanting only each other!) Mind you this activity, they tell us, is a good way to keep the brain functioning and, thereby, help keep at bay the onset of senility. As I can still just about programme my VCR I guess it must work! Now how many of you know the year that tea bags were first introduced into this country? According to Chris Robinson 1946 apparently; the year Bing recorded "Among My Souvenirs". I have saved any number of unusual objects as memorabilia but never a tea bag. So Chris's juxtaposition of perforated pyramids and a song recalling keepsakes of a lost love for his regular *Mystery Year* slot on BBC Radio South & West seems a little bizarre. Similarly, in what year did Dan Dare of the Eagle comic reach a painful end? The Crosby clue was "Play A Simple Melody"; but from the same month "Accidents Will Happen" might have been a more appropriate song! However, Chris certainly does his bit for the Crosby cause and Bing figures quite regularly on his Sunday Late Show quiz and in other circumstances. For instance, a tribute to Jimmy Monaco brought about a regular Bing-fest that included "An Apple For The Teacher", "That's For Me" and "Too Romantic", all from Bing films. Indeed, Jimmy reached the peak of his career writing songs for the latter's movies, and most of his lyricist collaborators were inspired to pen those kind of philosophical lyrics. "I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams" being a prime example, that Chris featured. Jimmy Monaco died in 1945 whilst his most famous song "I Can't Begin To Tell You" was at its height of popularity: Bing's recording with Carmen Cavallaro must have contributed to its success following on from Betty Grable's appealing version in The Dolly Sisters. In remembrance of Leslie Gaylor, Chris played one of my favourites, "The Second Time Around", the significance being that Leslie was primarily responsible for Bing's re-emergence on the recording scene in the 1970s, as the popular presenter explained. Other personal favourites heard were "That's A-Plenty", "Happy-go-Lucky You" and "Stardust". The latter, Chris informed his listeners, being the most performed song by the most performing artiste.

IF THERE'S ANYBODY HERE

Anne Hopper on her *Music Box* programme features a great wealth and variety of Crosby recordings that just about matches any other programme you're ever likely to hear. Twice she featured the song that heads this paragraph, and I'm prompted to refer to it because in the last issue of this magazine I was guilty of not picking up on the facts regarding a certain story of, shall we say, a duet of convenience. I'm grateful to member, Paul Hennessy, for gently drawing my attention to a considerable date discrepancy relating to that engaging story. As far as I know Paul was the only one who spotted it, but the anecdote is too good to dismiss entirely and we have to give Mr. Tresnant the benefit of the doubt and assume it was another song altogether. So, apart from Paul, if there is anybody here (or out there) reading this column please feel free to comment on any matters arising. It all helps to keep the party going. Meanwhile, back at the Music Box Anne was featuring tracks to coincide with the Road movies on TV. Thus we had "Chicago Style", "You're Dangerous" and with the Andrews Sisters, "You Don't Have To Know The Language". Bing, in fact, has been heard several times in the company of such stylish distaff duettists, including Carole Richards, Trudy Erwin, Frances Langford and Rosemary Clooney, and if you pick any one of their duets with Bing, Anne will have almost certainly have played it, as her Cumbria programme balances up the gender factor to avoid any hint of discrimination. However, during the course of the celebration of St. Patrick's Day, for which Anne played "Top O' The Morning", she related how on a visit to New York she observed signs reading 'Brits not welcome here' outside many Irish bars! Ah, well. Maybe one day we'll all be one big happy family. We'll certainly keep up the bonding, with Bing's music from the land of his forefathers a major catalyst in our book.

DEDICATIONS AND DILEMMAS

Many of the record programmes are simple dedications by request. David Lowe, Christine Prentice and Bill and Angela Rennells' shows being prime examples of this popular genre. Having your name read out on air and a record played in celebration of an event has always had popular appeal - especially when suggested by a third party sending their greetings. Bing's records have long been among the most requested for this agreeable exchange of sentiments and "The Anniversary Waltz" easily tops that list. Len, Maggie, Stan, Cyril, Ian and The Badger (they'll know who I mean) are all ICC members who keep the presenters Crosby orientated, and it pays off, believe me. However, it's good to hear so many requests for Bing numbers from listeners to these programmes who have no connection with our Circle of enthusiasts at all. Miss Prentice has stated that Bing is definitely the most popular artiste on A *String Of Pearls* and she has played any number of tracks by Bing that are engagingly different, for example, Bob Hope's signature tune, the Pigtails number and the song made famous by Jimmy Cagney in a film of the same name, to quote but three. David Lowe, of *As Time Goes By*, Bristol, found himself in a dilemma as he operates a sixteen week rota for his records, but that had to be broken in the spring as requests for The "Anniversary Waltz" kept coming in. He also came up with a triple treat for Bing's birthday, "You Belong To My Heart", "Maybe I'm Wrong Again" and "Once In A While", all worthy of inclusion in anyone's top twenty and all of which clearly indicate that a positive breakthrough from the confines of yesteryear's 'best of Bing' has most gratifyingly been achieved. Okay, so yet another split infinitive, but no worse than Bing's twice repeated solecism on "They Didn't Believe Me", a featured track on Judith Ley's Sundown show. Judith seems to like the Buddy Cole/Pete Moore tracks, often playing "At Sundown" for obvious reasons. From the same collection we were encouraged to believe "My Baby Just Cares For Me" despite the fact that the baby in question is ga-ga, as Bing's last line would imply; and from the Australian Cavalcade Of Song compact disc the charming KMH air-shot, "You're A Sweetheart"; following which she informed her listeners that Bing has as many fans now as in his hey-day. That sentiment certainly would be open to discussion, but we welcome her recognition of his continuing popularity.

FRYING TONIGHT

The Late Show is another Bristol based BBC programme, from newer fella Trevor Fry. In the last issue of this magazine you were advised to watch this space. Happily, it can be reported that Trevor is turning up trumps all the time with his week-day 'phone-in farrago of popular music, even giving out the ICC address. He, too, has succumbed to the quiz craze and from information supplied by Maggie Ryan, asked for Bing's real name and place and date of birth. Definitely one for fanatics! Whilst there is still a sixty-forty bias towards the 'best of' on Trevor's programme it can be reported that several numbers outside of that dying breed have also been played. "Sleepy Time Gal" and "After You've Gone" took care of Bing's early 'Fifties air-shot output, while "I Got Plenty Of Nuttin'" and "Just A Prayer Away" illustrated Bing's changing delivery through the 'Thirties and 'Forties. Another instance of a dilemma occurred following the playing of "Whiffenpoof Song" originally performed by autonomous 'gentleman songsters' at Yale University. Even our Maggie was unable to help with the origin of the title which I firmly believe to be an allusion to the Temple Bar fraternity raising their glasses in the smoky haze surrounding the tables down at Mory's and inhaling and exhaling their cigar smoke which, by onomatopoeic suggestion, gave rise to the 'whiff' and the 'poof'. Bing makes a parodied reference to this title in an amusing situation in a radio programme or film (I cannot recall just where right now but I believe Bob Hope was involved) when he says 'One whiff, and poof!', suggesting an explosion.

Listen out for Keith Fordyce, another presenter favourable to Mr. Crosby. Apart from a goodly selection from the Fine Old Chestnuts / New Tricks CD, and a certain favouritism slanted in the direction of Bing and the Andrews Sisters, Keith delved back into the dim, distant past to retrieve duets with both Frances Langford and Dixie Lee. Bing's Hawaiian period wasn't overlooked

either. To the twang of Lani McIntire's steel guitars you may well have plucked from the ether Bing crooning "Dancing Under The Stars". A charming south sea island style ballad notwithstanding thoughts of grass skirts and lawnmowers!

Another Devonian devotee of the pre-disco days is Douglas Mounce who for a whole week on his regular, BBC, morning programme made Bing the featured artiste. By standards from a year or so ago the five songs were fairly predictable. But among them was the 1939 version of "Stardust" - voted the second best song of the 20th. Century, Douglas told his listeners. I've an uncomfortable feeling that the considered number one would have been chosen from the second half. But you don't have to believe it. On other occasions he was generous with his accolades for both "Too Marvellous For Words" and "As Time Goes By". Two very acceptable alternatives to the run of the mill recordings.

THE LIKELY LADS

Members Arthur Blood and Neil Robinson, no less, guesting on BBC Radio Derby on the 23rd March reminiscing about Bing and generally singing his praises. Many of the oft told anecdotes of Bing's early years were recalled to enliven the factual information, and there was music too, of course. "Home Cookin'", "Sweethearts" and "Dear Old Donegal" from the Little Bit Of Irish CD were featured tracks. This came about through a request for more Bing Crosby on the radio - so Neil and Arthur rallied to the call and got themselves invited on the weekday afternoon *Drive Time* as presenter Paul MacKenzie's guests. They covered a lot of ground in the limited time available and it was obvious that they could have gone on all night about their favourite subject. Such enthusiastic endeavour is to be applauded, especially as the ICC address was read out. The latest news being that a second showing for Neil and Arthur is on the cards. In the interim, though, Arthur had been supplying a promised recording of "Mr Booze" and other tracks to Mr MacKenzie who is addicted to ba-ba-ba-booing (in a passable impression of Rich Little imitating Bing), and who plays a Crosby record every day despite, we believe, being less than the age at which, reputedly, life begins!

Similarly, Jim Reilly has been flying the flag on Angel Radio, a privately run radio station on the Isle Of Wight. Although it has limited facilities and broadcasts from the top floor of the Age Concern building in Newport it is a very professionally organised group of enthusiasts that operate it. Jim had a forty-five minute 'phone in guesting, punctuated by relevant recordings, on Tony Smith's *Scatterbrain* programme during which he acquainted the local listeners with much of the information to be found on the ICC Fact File and much, much more. Initially, Tony thought he would be having an American link-up not realising the strength of the British based Circle and he was keen to know just how many members we have over here. Again, though relatively young by many of the members standards, Tony is in to 'oldies' where music is concerned and really enjoyed the five tracks that Jim had selected to illustrate his dissertation, including the 1955 version of "Ol' Man River", "The Folks Who Live On The Hill" and, for Leslie Gaylor, "Black Moonlight". Jim also gave out the ICC address, and promoted Diary Of A Lifetime, so a few new members may ensue by all this publicity.

My thanks are due to George Patmore and Bill Wesley for Bing 'sitings' in less than usual circumstances. George wrote to say that BBC Radio Shropshire has a 7pm to 9pm jazz night on Wednesdays, presented by Mel Hill with "Bob White" being a favoured vocal. Bill drew my attention to a daily serialisation of a Radio 4 drama which opened and closed each day with Bing's 1931 version of his signature tune. It bore no relationship to the drama, and although practically everyone involved with the production was credited (including the tea boy it seemed) no mention of Bing or the record was made. One wonders how choices like that are made. A 'siting' of my own occurred on a recent visit to the cinema. Whilst enjoying the screenplay of *The Talented Mr Ripley* I was delighted to hear "May I", by a certain crooner, as background music. Bing is alive and well and living all around us.

THE OLDEST ESTABLISHED

Longtime Crosbyphile and respected authority on Bing and other artistes, Ken Crossland, has again been on Mike Adams and Chris Savory's *Record Collections* programme that goes out on BBC Radio Shropshire. On this occasion the subject was crooners. Ken, initially, described the origin of the use of the word as we know it. That is, once microphones and other electric amplification had come about a new singing style was born. It is generally accepted that the first performer to take advantage of this medium was 'Whispering' Jack Smith. Subsequently, the famous trio of Crosby, Columbo and Vallee vied for popular appeal. Tragically, and unfortunately for him, Columbo went out with a bang, while Vallee, conceding defeat, disappeared up his own megaphone, leaving Bing as the King of the Crooners; an appellation that he never ever lost. As Ken explained, Bing had a natural talent that was perfectly suited to this more intimate presentation of a song, playing the 1936 recording of "So Do I" as a supreme example of his delivery. Dean Martin and Perry Como soon picked up on the Crosby style, but Sinatra went his own way leaving Bing to pursue his natural, musical mannerisms against Frank's art form of phrasing learned from Tommy Dorsey's breathing technique with the trombone. Time out for the Crosby-Sinatra parody from Frank's Vimms show of 22nd. November 1944 wherein the host sings 'There's just one, Bing. Long live the King.' That they were able to co-exist as the real heavyweights of the crooning fraternity for thirty years endorsed their standing with the public, and each other. However, Ken also gave considerable credit to Dino and closed the programme with the three gambling gadabouts giving their rousing performance of the number from *Guys And Dolls* that heads this paragraph.

WET, WET, WET

No, don't worry. Not in this column! Just a tip from Frank Wappatt on how to preserve and play your precious vinyl records. A cocktail of water, 15% alcohol and two drops of liquid soap will dispel any dust, dirt and foreign bodies. Even a worn record when actually played wet will eliminate most of the surface noise. So if you're copying

on to mini-disc, for example, an ideal, once only remedy for intrusive surface noise. But this remedy is not appropriate for 78s apparently. I've always found that a little wax polish will help smooth the path of the needle on shellacs, the pick-up arm of which actually weighs in at around one ton per square inch at the point of contact. But with so much of our collections now on commercially released compact discs our records tend to languish in their covers, unplayed. Shame really. Frank has been making his usual erudite contribution to the Crosby cause featuring the likes of "It's Easy to Remember" and "Lovely Lady" - 'one of the most romantic songs ever, sung by the most romantic singer', opined our *Stars On 78* presenter. And on a later programme a dissertation on Bing and the Andrews Sisters featured no less than seven tracks by 'one of the greatest duo acts ever', as Frank put it. But just to prove that the great and the good sometimes get it wrong he played the blow-up take of "Ac-Cent-Chu-Ate The Positive" alongside the frequently heard, but amusing, "Pistol Packin' Mama", with "Is You Is Or Is You Ain't Ma Baby?" coming in at number one for my money.

Whilst W. B. Yeats wasn't around to hear Bing singing "The Isle Of Innisfree" (he died in 1939) the poet might well have approved of the Crosby recording based on his poem *The Lake Isle Of Innisfree,* the first lines of which read:

> *I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,*
> *And a small cabin build there, of clay and wattles made:*

Of which, Russell Davies on his Classics And *Curiosities* programme on BBC Radio 2, Sunday p.m., was to say: 'It's not easy to imagine Bing doing that. He would have built a golf course.' I'm warming more to Russell lately, for despite his studied sarcasm, his jibes are, for the most part, harmlessly tongue in cheek, and he does play a lot of entertaining music. In playing Bing's 1933 version of "Home On The Range" he commented that most composers of cowboy songs had never seen a cactus out of a pot, and still on the flora theme noted the high number of flower songs on the Cavalcade KMH CD; playing "Last Night's Gardenias". But before leaving that excellent collection for other goodies from the Old Groaner he featured and dedicated the Bing and Connee duet "Number Ten Lullaby Lane" to a certain family in Downing Street!

NO OTHER LOVE

An appropriate title for Desmond Carrington to play in his tribute to Leslie Gaylor, for Leslie had only the one interest beyond his family - Bing. Desmond was to say; 'I know all my broadcasting colleagues will be as sorry as I am to learn of the death, yesterday, of Leslie Gaylor. Someone who championed Bing in all his works over so many years, and who was an invaluable help to so many radio programmes like this one. Thank you Leslie.' In noting Bing's birthday the *Say It With Music* presenter featured three tracks that covered a twenty-two year time span of Crosby: "Love In Bloom", "Just A Little Lovin'" and "I've Got Five Dollars", but broke from his usual tradition of commercial recordings to include in his weekly Crosby Corner the parody of "Road To Morocco" with Bob Hope and Dorothy Lamour from a Philco Radio Time broadcast.

Speaking of which, Keith Skues turned up trumps with a quite remarkable presentation of the very first Philco Radio Time of the 16th October 1946 - the entire half-hour show! BBC Eastern Counties covers a huge catchment area which Skuesy caters for every weekday evening into the small hours. He took this Stateside broadcast from a transcription disc that he was given way back in the 'Seventies and which, I assume, he has now transferred to compact disc, as so many presenters do these days with their tapes and records. What an amazing boost for Bing on this normally 'phone-in, records and chat programme. Well done that man! 'Mr. Bing Crosby' figures quite regularly, and despite Keith's usual formal introduction of the Old Groaner he is not averse to playing some quite informal tracks, as the rather hokey, by orchestral accompaniment, "Where The Morning Glories Grow" will illustrate.

PACKING 'EM IN

I know of no other record programme that plays so many records with so little chat as the Bill & Angela Rennells *Harmony Night*: so much played to so many by so few. I've not actually counted, but it must be at least fifteen records an hour - all dedications or personal requests. Whilst there was one dissenting voice complaining of 'too much Crosby on your programme', Bill dismissed the complaint with the comment that this is not our programme this is our listeners' programme, and if they ask for Bing we will play his records. Apart from which Angela, herself, is quite a keen Bing lady. There immediately followed "I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams" as much to say, lighten up a little. I'm often hearing requests from our ICC man, Ian Lawrence, down there south of the Thames and his requests, along with many other listener dedications, cover a widely ranging spectrum of Crosbyana. One of the tracks that was asked for included some dialogue, and I always wince a little when I hear Bing on his autobiography set introduce "You Are My Sunshine" with the words ...it was quite a favourite of Sir Winston Churchill at the outbreak of the last war. The year was 1941 of course.' Oh, really? It may have been the year of the recording and the attack on Pearl Harbour but the British people, led by Winnie, had been engaging in quite a hefty bout of pat-a-cake with Hitler & Co. for more than two years prior to that. Especially did it rankle on this occasion, as Sir Winston's Chartwell estate in the northern region of the garden of England' can't be that far away from where Radio Kent broadcasts!

BLIMEY! BRAS, BRIEFS AND BING

That heading is not my concoction this time. That was Paul Barnes reaction to the news that Marks & Spencer had issued a CD devoted entirely to our man; selecting "I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams" from M&S's Crosby Collection. Sadly, it doesn't include "Lawd, You Made The Nightie Too Long" or "Your Socks Don't Match" or Barnsey would have surely played one or the other! But, joking aside, credit due to Jim Reilly for the considerable part he played in this very pleasing production. Averaging three Bing tracks every week *Gold For Grown Ups* vies with the Rennells' *Harmony Night* for quantity. But, and no disrespect to Angela and Bill, erstwhile saxophonist

Barnsey is so erudite in the field of popular music - particularly swing and jazz. Every track played is embellished with interesting, anecdotal information, be it concerning the composer, lyricist, orchestra or featured performer. Yes, we know that a lot of info. comes from reference books - we all take advantage of them - but you still have to have the broadcasting skills to present them in an entertaining manner and, more importantly, have a natural feel for the music you're featuring. One such recording; "It's Been A Long, Long Time", was enhanced by an excerpt from Les Paul's autobiography:

> *'Bing Crosby was amazing. More than anybody I ever worked with in a studio. No matter what I came up with for a bridge, or an ending, Bing could adapt immediately. The most he ever needed was two takes.'*

All the calendar photographs have been described and relevant tracks played, and most will know which tracks they are. I'm a little unhappy that there are no tracks from the 'Thirties but pleased to have seen the inclusion of "I've Got The Girl" and "Makin' Whoopee", the latter musically illustrating this very month as this column is being typed, while the first, though due again in October, was played to illustrate the very essence of the authentic 'Twenties sound.

Music with a message is a noticeable undercurrent in Paul's programme. Thus the regular inclusion of "Living One Day At A Time", and in a discussion on the selection of the all-time song, which all would agree is a near impossible task, Barnsey, on this occasion, chose "Pick Yourself Up", performed by the two septuagenarians of song and dance. A delightful gem from Dorothy Fields and Jerome Kern worthy of inclusion in anyone's book of musical philosophy. However, it's the song and not the performance that defines it, stated Barnsey, in a reference to much of the more contemporary music that relies on presentation rather than the merit of the song. In a later programme this comment was pointed up by Paul featuring Bing and Ethel Merman with their All-Time Flop Parade medley every one of which showed a talent sadly lacking in much of today's music. While still on the theme of musical likes and dislikes Barnsey At The Beeb featured the well-known Chesterfield send-up of "Goodnight Irene", a song which Paul hates to the very core of his being (his own words). This parodied version of which, presumably, delights him to the outer limits of his sensitivities!

In noting the sad demise of our dear friend from the Isle of Wight, Paul observed, 'He was not on our patch, but certainly on our wavelength.', and went on to mark the occasion with a musical tribute featuring a short medley from a 1944 radio programme that included "Down By The River" and one of Leslie's known favourites, "It's Easy To Remember", the continuance of that title line being 'and so hard to forget'. Don't worry, Leslie, we won't.

Bert Bishop, June 2000

HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE ON BING

Wig has some exciting news for us!

Hofstra University of Hempstead, New York (on Long Island) has since 1976 presented more than 90 academic conferences on major historical figures and events, including ten that assessed the administrations of each American President from Franklin Roosevelt through George Bush. Other conferences have focused on such well known individuals as George Sand, Albert Einstein, Walt Whitman, James Joyce, George Orwell, Vincent Van Gogh and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

HOFSTRA UNIVERSITY
HOFSTRA CULTURAL CENTER
Hempstead, New York 11549

In 1998, Hofstra presented a three-day conference on Frank Sinatra that attracted worldwide attention and considerable debate among Frank's legion of fans. The University has now scheduled a similar scholarly conference on Bing, which will be held on November 14, 15 and 16, 2002, and examine Bing's entire life and career. Letters of invitation already have been sent to members of the Crosby family, and commitments to participate have been received from New York area music critics and book authors Gary Giddins and Will Friedwald.

In the near future, an official "call for papers" will be mailed by Hofstra University to university and professional organizations that might be interested in participating. Approximately 70 percent of the conference will be "scholarly" and include presentations and discussions by leading scholars and other professionals. All papers and scholarly proposals will be reviewed (and accepted or rejected) by a special faculty committee from Hofstra and other universities in the New York area. The academic proceedings will be recorded on audio and video for subsequent academic distribution.

The other 30 percent of the conference will be highlighted by the participation of leading professional performers, entertainers and dignitaries who acknowledge Bing's influence on their careers or personal lives. For example, at the 1998 Sinatra Conference such participants included Joe Bushkin, Skitch Henderson, Quincy Jones, Alan King and Vic Damone, among many others. In planning its Bing Crosby Conference, Hofstra University will be writing to possible participants as follows:

> *"We believe that Bing Crosby was a seminal influence on popular music and singers in the 20th century. Indeed, many participants in the Hofstra Sinatra Conference cited Bing Crosby as the first and foremost influence on their careers. Further, Bing Crosby's career is uniquely connected to the American tradition of film musicals. As an Academy Award winner for Best Actor, we will focus on his acting career and will*

consider his work in radio and television and his major efforts in entertaining troops during World War II. Bing Crosby became a living legend, a performer of timeless appeal and universal prominence. As we approach the centenary of his birth, we will examine his impact on the fields of music and entertainment, as well as his stature as a pre-eminent artist whose achievements transcend the world of entertainment. We believe these influences and achievements should be studied and catalogued in and through the scholarship forum of a major university."

The Hofstra University Conference on Bing Crosby is being planned by Dr. Ruth Prigozy, Professor of English and Film Studies, who also will serve as Conference Director. As American/Canadian representative of the ICC, I have offered her the complete support and assistance of our organization and will be working with her on advance planning for the conference. Hofstra University has taken out a full ICC membership in Dr. Prigozy's name and will be providing me with further details about the Crosby Conference for publication in future issues of BING. The Hofstra Conference should go a long way toward restoring Bing to his rightful place as one of the 20th century's greatest entertainers, and it certainly will constitute an outstanding introduction to the commemoration of Bing's 100th birthday in May of 2003. Stay tuned for further developments!

F. B. (Wig) Wiggins June 15, 2000

(Editor: This is tremendous news and I'm booking my place! I wonder if my wife wants to do her Christmas shopping in 2002 in New York?)

Keeping Track

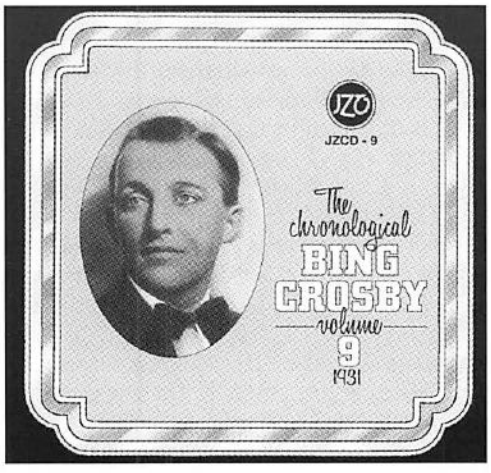
A Compact Disc Review by Jim Reilly

We have a good collection of CDs to review this time around and I am glad to see that we have now bridged the gap with the Jonzo albums giving us a complete sequence of Bing's recordings through to February 1937. A couple of albums owe much to the silver screen; one from MCA, USA and the other from Israel of all places. We get a dose of fluffs and a new release of 'Fancy Meeting You Here' on a Rosemary Clooney album followed up by a further batch of Kraft material. I have rather given up trying to find out what is happening with the BMG promised CDs and won't mention them again until they are available in the shops. We had a good response to the competition and I was pleased to see that the lucky winners came from the USA, Canada and the UK.

The Chronological Bing Crosby Vol. 9 **Jonzo Records JZCD-9** **UK**

1. I Apologise
2. Dancing In The Dark
3. Star Dust
4. Just One More Chance (PCVE68310-1)
5. I'm Thru With Love (PCVE68311-1)
6. Sweet And Lovely
7. Now That You're Gone
8. A Faded Summer Love
9. Too Late
10. Goodnight Sweetheart
11. Gems From George White's Scandals Part 1
12. Gems From George White's Scandals Part 2
13. Where The Blue Of The Night (-A)
14. Where The Blue Of The Night (-B)
15. I'm Sorry Dear (-A)
16. I'm Sorry Dear (-B)
17. Dinah (-A)
18. Dinah (-B)
19. Can't We Talk It Over
20. I Found You (-A)
21. I Found You (-B)

Tracks 4 and 5 have of course gone down in history as the songs Bing sang on his first solo radio broadcast and it is hard to believe that this took place some 69 years ago. With the exception of track 21 all the titles have appeared previously on CD. For those who may not know, 'Gems From George White's Scandals part 2' includes a little ditty entitled "That's Why Darkies Were Born" sung by Frank Munn. It is strange to think that a song like this couldn't even be contemplated today and it just goes to show how times have changed. The sound quality is very good throughout and as always the notes by John McNicholas are really informative. They enable you to establish the differences in the alternate takes which is particularly useful for members not being fortunate enough to have the book 'Alternate Bing Crosby' by Colin Pugh or those excellent books 'The Crosby Collection' by Fred Reynolds.



The Chronological Bing Crosby Vol. 10 **Jonzo Records JZCD-10** **UK**

1. Snuggled On Your Shoulder
2. St Louis Blues (-A)
3. St Louis Blues (-B)
4. Starlight (Help Me Find The One I Love) (-A)
5. Starlight (Help Me Find The One I Love) (-C)
6. How Long Will It Last
7. Love You Funny Thing
8. My Woman
9. Shine
10. Face The Music Medley Part 1 (-B)
11. Face The Music Medley Part 2 (-C)
12. Shadows On The Window (-A)
13. Shadows On The Window (-B)
14. Paradise (-A)
15. Paradise (-B)
16. You're Still In My Heart
17. Lawd You Made The Night Too Long (-A)
18. Lawd You Made The Night Too Long (-B)

A number of the rare alternate takes make their debuts here but otherwise all titles have previously appeared on CD. Again the quality is very good and Bing is in fine voice throughout. To those members who have supported Jonzo these latest releases are the most important CDs to have been released for a long time as they bridge the gap and make the series complete (from the onset of Bing's career in 1926 right up to the 23rd February 1937). The Chronological Bing Crosby series now stands at 19 CDs and is a magnificent achievement by John McNicholas and it is by far the largest collection of Bing records or CDs ever to be issued commercially. I sincerely hope that members will continue to support John's fine efforts. Running Times: JZCD09 - 70.08 JZCD10 - 66.32 Both CDs are obtainable in the UK and the rest of Europe from Jonzo Records, PO Box 212, Harrow Middlesex HA3 7LD. Price each: £8.60 or £17.10 for both. Cheques to be made payable to Jonzo Records. USA and Canadian Members can obtain copies from Wig Wiggins (Address inside front cover).

Bing Crosby - Academy Award Winners & Nominees 1934-1960 MCA 088 112274-2 USA

1. Love In Bloom
2. Pennies From Heaven
3. The Way You Look Tonight w Dixie Lee Crosby
4. Sweet Leilani
5. Thanks For The Memory
6. Only Forever
7. White Christmas (1942 - B take)
8. Swinging On A Star
9. Ac-Cent-Tchu-Ate The Positive w. Andrews Sisters
10. Aren't You Glad You're You
11. You Keep Coming Back Like A Song
12. On The Atchison Topeka And Sante Fe
13. Mona Lisa
14. In The Cool Cool Cool Of The Evening w. Jane Wyman
15. Zing A Little Zong w. Jane Wyman
16. Secret Love
17. Count Your Blessings Instead Of Sheep
18. Gigi
19. Never On A Sunday
20. The Second Time Around

All the songs on this extremely pleasant album are well known standards that either won or were nominated for best song Oscars. It is a pity that we didn't get "True Love" included as Wig had intended (see Wig's 'Bing in the USA' column). Our American colleague is to be congratulated for his selection of titles and for his very informative well-written liner notes. I must say that the quality is excellent and even though all the titles have previously appeared on CD I recommend this album to all members. I can never hear too much "Aren't You Glad You're You", "Mona Lisa" "Gigi" and "The Second Time Around"; they are marvellous songs as indeed are all the other songs included here. Time: 60.56 $18.00

Just For Fun **Broadway Intermission BRCD-134** **USA**

1. We're A Couple Of Soldiers (fluff)
2. Corrine Corrina (parody)
3. Robins And Roses (parody)
4. I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams (unissued)
5. Don't Let That Moon Get Away (unissued)
6. A Blues Serenade (fluff)
7. Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams (fluff)
8. I Only Want A Buddy Not A Sweetheart (fluff)
9. Hello Mom
10. Duke The Spook
11. Jingle Bells (fluff)
12. You Belong To My Heart (fluff)
13. A Door Will Open
14. You Took Advantage Of Me
15. A Hundred And Sixty Acres (parody)
16. I Might Be Your Once In A While
17. Indian Summer
18. Spring Fever

This is the reissue of an LP with the same title on the same label. It contains a mixture of mainly fluffs and parodies, most of which are probably well known to members. Tracks 1,2 3, 7, 11, 15, 17 and 18 have appeared on CD previously but all the other tracks to my knowledge are making their debuts here. "Spring Fever" was originally released on CD as "The Ol' Spring Fever" (MCAD-5764). Probably this CD is only for the ardent collectors, as I know some members don't like to hear Bing in his less saintly mode as per track 7. Running Time: 48.52 $15.00

The Sound Of The Movies - Bing Crosby (2CDs) **History. 20.3110-HI** **Israel**

CD1 *KING OF JAZZ:* 1. Happy Feet, 2 A Bench In The Park w Brox Sisters, 3 A Bench In The Park, 4. It Happened In Monterey - Non Bing, 5. I Like To Do Things For You, 6. Ragamuffin Romeo - Non Bing, 7. So The Bluebirds And The Blackbirds Got Together, 8. Song Of The Dawn, *THE BIG BROADCAST (1932):* 9. Dinah w The Mills Brothers (-A), 10. Please, 11. Here Lies Love, *COLLEGE HUMOR:* 12. Learn To Croon, 13. Moonstruck, 14. Down The Old Ox Road, *TOO MUCH HARMONY:* 15. Thanks, 16. The Day You Came Along, 17. I Guess It Had To Be That Way, 18. Black Moonlight

CD2 *STAR SPANGLED RHYTHM:* 1. Main Title - Orchestra, 2. Hit The Road To Dreamland - Non Bing, 3. On The Swing Shift - Non Bing, 4. I'm Doing It For Defence - Non Bing, 5. A Sweater A Sarong And A Peek-A-Boo Bang - Non Bing, 6. Priorities - Non Bing, 7. That Old Black Magic - Non Bing, 8. Smart As Tack - Non Bing, 9. Old Glory, *BLUE SKIES:* 10. Everybody Step, 11. A Couple Of Song And Dance Men w. Fred Astaire, 12. I've Got My Captain Working For Me Now, 13. Getting Nowhere, 14. Say It Isn't So, 15. I'll See You In Cuba w Olga San Juan, 16. You'd Be Surprised - Non Bing, 17. Puttin' On The Ritz - Non Bing, 18. Blue Skies, 19. War Montage: Any Bonds Today / This Is The Army / White Christmas / God Bless America, 20. A Serenade To An Old Fashioned Girl - Non Bing, 21. Medley: The Little Things In Life / Not For All The Rice In China / Russian

Lullaby, 22. Finale: You Keep Coming Back Like A Song w Joan Caulfield

It is strange that there has been a crop of film score type CDs released of late and this is yet another example. And it is also somewhat surprising to learn that this particular CD has been produced in Israel. The sound quality is generally quite good although there is some surface noise that is at its worst for some reason on the 'Blue Skies' songs. I also can't understand why the front sleeve has a photograph of Paulette Goddard - I wonder what happened to Bing?

Running Time: CD1 - 56.20, CD2 - 64.25 *Price: $10.00*

Rosemary Clooney Clap Hands Here Comes Rosie / Fancy Meeting You Here **Taragon Records** **TARCD-1060** **USA**

Clap Hands Here Comes Rosie *Fancy Meeting You Here*

1. Clap Hands Here Comes Rosie/ Everything's Coming Up Rosie
2. Give Me The Simple Life
3. Bye Bye Blackbird
4. Aren't You Glad You're You
5. You Got
6. Too Marvellous For Words
7. Something's Gotta Give
8. Hooray For Love
9. Mean To Me
10. Oh What A Beautiful Mornin'
11. It Could Happen To You
12. Makin' Whoopee
13. Fancy Meeting You Here
14. On A Slow Boat To China
15. I Can't Get Started
16. Hindustan
17. It Happened In Monterey
18. You Came A Long Way From St Louis / You Can Take The Boy Out Of The Country
19. Love Won't Let You Get Away
20. How About You
21. Brazil / Here We Are (Face To Face Again)
22. Isle Of Capri
23. Say Si Si (Para Vigo Me Voy)
24. Calcutta
25. Love Won't Let You Get Away

If you like Rosemary Clooney then you will most definitely like this CD which is good value for money when you consider that the Japanese CD "Fancy Meeting You Here" (RCA R25J-1003) cost about £16.00 in 1990. Bing of course duets with Rosie on tracks 13 - 25 and Rosie appears solo on tracks 1 - 12. This is yet another 2 LPs on one CD album that I am pleased to add to my collection. Running Time: 69.17 *Price: $17*

Rosemary Clooney - Many A Wonderful Moment **Bear Family Records BCD 15927 HK** **Germany**

Let me quote from the publicity material:-

This third volume of the Bear Family trilogy tracing the recording career of Rosemary Clooney picks up the story in 1958, the year she ended her association with Columbia - the label that had established her as one of the world's most popular girl singers. As the 1950s drew to a close, her career entered a new phase, which would soon establish her as one of the foremost album artists on such prestigious labels as MGM, Coral, RCA, Reprise and Capitol.

The years 1958-1968 found Rosemary mature vocally and reach the very pinnacle of artistic achievement as she interpreted the standard generation songbook in classic albums arranged by such luminaries as Billy May and Nelson Riddle. *Fancy Meeting You Here* (in duet with Bing Crosby) and *Rosie Solves The Swinging Riddle* are familiar examples, but here too is the chance to rediscover her forays into the worlds of Spiritual Music *(Hymns From The Heart),* Americana *(How The West Was Won),* Latin Rhythms *(A Touch Of Tabasco)* and the Nashville Sound *(Country Hits From The Heart).* The rich legacy of songs from Broadway musicals is visited in her selections from box office smashes such as *Finian's Rainbow* and *South Pacific* as well as the less familiar *Oh, Captain* and *Whoop-Up.*

This 8-CD compendium is topped off with a lavishly illustrated hardcover book containing a fully detailed discography and Deborah Grace Winer's biography of the Clooney years 1958 to 1968. A thrilling portrait of one of the most highly regarded singers the world has ever known.

CD1: Captain Henry St. James (& Jose Ferrer) - A Very Proper Town (& Jose Ferrer) - Life Does A Man A Favor (& Jose Ferrer) - Give It All You Got (& Jose Ferrer) - Three Paradises (Jose Ferrer) - Keep It Simple - Morning Music Of Montmartre - Hey, Madame (& Jose Ferrer) - It's Never Quite The Same (Jose Ferrer) - We're Not Children (& Jose Ferrer) - Surprise (Jud Conlon Singers) - All The Time (Jose Ferrer) - You're So Right For Me (& Jose Ferrer) - Brazil/Here We Are (Face To Face Again) (& Bing Crosby) - How About You (& Bing Crosby) - Love Won't Let You Get Away (& Bing Crosby) - On A Slow Boat To China (& Bing Crosby) - It Happened In Monterey (& Bing Crosby) - Hindustan (& Bing Crosby) - Fancy Meeting You Here (& Bing Crosby) - Calcutta (& Bing Crosby) - Isle Of Capri (& Bing Crosby) - Say 'Si Si' (Para Vigo Me Voy) (& Bing Crosby) - You Came A Long Way From St. Louis/You Can Take The Boy Out Of The Country (& Bing Crosby) - I Can't Get Started (& Bing Crosby) - Love Won't Let You Get Away (short version) (& Bing Crosby) - Keep It Simple (long version) - Ford Thunderbird Promo

CD2 to **5**: Non Bing

CD6: The Wonderful Season Of Love - Without Love - I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry - Beautiful Brown Eyes - Give Myself A Party - If I Can Stay Away Long Enough - Love Has Come My Way - Kiss Him For Me - How's The World Treating You - Please Help Me I'm Falling - Just Because - Any Time - I Really Don't Want To Know - This Ole House - Bound For The Promised Land (& Bing Crosby) - Crossing The Plains (& Bing Crosby) - Sweet Betsy From Pike - Buffalo Gals (& Bing Crosby) - Green Grow The Lilacs (& Bing Crosby) - California Ball - A Railroader's Bride I'll Be - Skip To My Lou (& Bing Crosby) - Careless Love - Jennie Jenkins - The Rose And The Butterfly - Mixed Emotions

- I Will Follow You (Mono) - A Hundred Years From Today - The Prisoner's Song - I Will Follow You (Stereo) - Some Enchanted Evening

CD7: How Are Things In Glocca Morra - Look To The Rainbow - It Came Upon A Midnight Clear - All Alone - Miss Otis Regrets - Hello Faithless - Baby, The Ball Is Over - Thanks For Nothing (At All) - Black Coffee - Just One Of Those Things - The Man That Got Away - A Good Man Is Hard To Find - I Got A Right To Sing The Blues - Careless Love - The Rules Of The Road - That Travelin' Two-Beat (& Bing Crosby) - The Poor People Of Paris (& Bing Crosby) - Adios Senorita (& Bing Crosby) - Roamin' In The Gloamin' (& Bing Crosby) - Come To The Mardi Gras (& Bing Crosby) - Ciao, Ciao, Bambina (& Bing Crosby) - The Daughter Of Molly Malone (& Bing Crosby) - I Get Ideas (& Bing Crosby) - Hear That Band (& Bing Crosby) - The New Vienna Woods (& Bing Crosby) - Knees Up, Mother Brown (& Bing Crosby) - That Travelin' Two-Beat (& Bing Crosby) (Reprise)

CD 8: Non Bing
I can't say that I have had the opportunity of listening to these eight CDs but I am given to understand that the quality is pretty good. The prohibitive thing from my point of view is the cost of this set at some 300 DM (say £100).

Bing Crosby On Radio
The last batch of Kraft Music Hall CDs were very well received and here we have a further four volumes of the same. Overall the quality is perfectly good but I must point out that a few of the 115 tracks included could have been better as they include some extraneous noises etc.. Nevertheless, overall I enjoyed all four volumes and there are some rarely heard titles included. Bing sings a large variety of songs from love songs to cowboy songs and he even goes teetotal to drink the Old Green River Dry. Along the way we also get some WWII songs. As per the previous Bing On Radio discs these are priced at £10.00 each including packaging and posting (please make cheques payable to B Whittingham). To order all four volumes, contact Barry Whittingham, "El Rancho Grande" 25c Garton Close, Cinderhill, Nottingham, NG6 8RZ.

The Krafty Young Bing Volume 5 Bar One Records BCR-032
1. Smarty, 2. Can I Forget You (version one), 3. Where Or When, 4. Have You Got Any Castles Baby, 5. Sweet Little You, 6. The Moon Got In My Eyes (version one), 7. Josephine, 8. The Folks Who Live On The Hill, 9. The Moon Got In My Eyes (version two), 10. There's A Girl In The Heart Of Maryland, 11. Can I Forget You (version two), 12. I Still Love To Kiss You Goodnight, 13. When You Dream About Hawaii, 14. If It's The Last Thing I Do, 15. Once In A While (version one), 16. The Lonesome Road, 17. Sweet Stranger, 18. Swingin' Down The Lane, 19. She's Tall She's Tan She's Terrific, 20. Once In A While (version two), 21. Rosalie, 22. Remember Me w Constance Bennett, 23. This Is My Night To Dream, 24. On The Sentimental Side, 25. You're A Sweetheart, 26. On Moonlight Bay, 27. I See Your Face Before Me, 28. Thanks For The Memory
The Krafty Young Bing Volume 6 Bar One Records BCR-033
1. The Gypsy In My Soul, 2. Side By Side, 3. An Old Flame Never Dies, 4. It's The Natural Thing To Do w Bob Burns, 5. Sail Along Silv'ry Moon w Bob Burns & William Frawley, 6. The Trail Of The Lonesome Pine, 7. Just A Dream Of You, 8. Down The Old Green River, 9. Could Be w Johnny Mercer, Marie Wilson & Ken Carpenter, 10. Ride Tenderfoot Ride, 11. Two Bouquets, 12. I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart, 13. You Ain't Kidding w Connie Boswell, 14. Vict'ry Polka, 15. Bless 'Em All, 16. People Will Say We're In Love w Trudy Erwin, 17. Darling Je Vous Aime Beaucoup, 18. Please Think Of Me, 19. Sometimes I'm Happy w Trudy Erwin, 20. Hit The Road To Dreamland, 21. San Fernando Valley, 22. Shoo Shoo Baby, 23. Iowa, 24. It's Only A Paper Moon, 25. Thanks, 26. I'll Get By, 27. Amor, 28. I'll Remember April
The Krafty Young Bing Volume 7 Bar One Records BCR-034
1. South Of The Border, 2. My Little Buckaroo, 3. You're The Only Star In My Blue Heaven, 4. I'm Building A Sailboat Of Dreams, 5. I'm Just Wild About Harry, 6. I Wonder What's Become Of Sally, 7. Honeysuckle Rose, 8. Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives To Me, 9. It Must Be True, 10. I Promise You, 11. The Pessimistic Character (With The Crab-Apple Face), 12. That Old Feeling, 13. The Moon Of Manakoora, 14. My Heart Stood Still, 15. My Heart Is Taking Lessons, 16. Whistle While You Work, 17. Let's Waltz For Old Times Sake, 18. I'd Love To Live In Loveland, 19. Mexicali Rose / Sweet As A Song, 20. Where The Blue Of The Night, 21. Small Fry w Donald O'Connor, 22. Now It Can Be Told, 23. Kentucky Babe, 24. You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby, 25. My Reverie, 26. The Dipsy Doodle, 27. Who Blew Out The Flame, 28. Medley: *Don't Be That Way / Once In A While / In The Shade Of The New Apple Tree,* 29. Lullaby In Rhythm, 30. Hurry Home
The Krafty Young Bing Volume 8 Bar One Records BCR-035
1. You Couldn't Be Cuter, 2. At A Perfume Counter, 3. When You're A Long Long Way From Home, 4. The Funny Old Hills, 5. I Cried For You, 6. I Have Eyes, 7. Old Folks, 8. Between A Kiss And A Sigh, 9. Thanks For Everything, 10. Deep In A Dream, 11. Together, 12. Missouri Waltz, 13. Could Be, 14. Penny Serenade, 15. Yaaka Hula Hicky Dula, 16. I Get Along Without You Very Well, 17. Jeannie With The Light Brown Hair, 18. S'posin', 19. Little Sir Echo, 20. Sing A Song Of Sunbeams, 21. East Side Of Heaven, 22. Honolulu, 23. Sweet Genevieve, 24. Hang Your Heart On A Hickory Limb, 25. I Want A Girl Just Like The Girl (That Married Dear Old Dad), 26. Class Will Tell, 27. We've Come A Long Way Together, 28. Mickey, 29. Our Love

GUEST APPEARANCES

To Mother With Love **ASV Living Era CD AJA5351** **UK**

25 Tracks (1 Bing) My Mother's Waltz

This CD appears to be made specifically as a Mother's day gift and is crammed full of songs dedicated to dear old Mum. I include it here, as I am sure that this is the first time 'My Mother's Waltz' has had an airing on CD. Artists also appearing include: Arthur Tracy, John McCormack, Sophie Tucker, Cavan O'Connor, Gene Autry, Al Jolson, Dick Todd and others *Price: £7.99*

The Sound Of The Movies - Movie Box Vol. 1 (2CDs) **History20.3113-HI Israel**

34 Tracks (6 Bing) **CD1** Sweet Leilani, Small Fry w Johnny Mercer, White Christmas, Swinging On A Star, Put It There Pal w Bob Hope, **CD2** All You Want To Do is Dance

This is also a film song double album very similar in nature to the one on the same label shown above. Price $10.00

COMPETITION WINNERS

It was nice to see that we got a good response to the competition and I am pleased to announce that our five winners are:-

L S Common - Morpeth, Charles Culley - Bury St Edmunds, Joe Groom - Ohio, J M Lawrence - Wimborne and Donald Webber - Vancouver

Each of the above received a copy of the Perennial Music double album Hollywood Sings! Golden Voices From The Silver Screen.

John Tracy of Perennial told me that they had a good response from members and I quote from his letter.

"I'm delighted to report that all went well with numerous replies from around the world on the most bizarre and amusing collection of postcards it has yet been my pleasure to receive. Apart from the B.C. promoting variety, other highlights among those dropping on the mat were a Canadian supermarket, James Cagney, Charlie Mingus, a Japanese mountain, a temple in Istanbul, a card from the Massachusetts Office of Tourism and an Edinburgh werewolf! Such infinite variety - and everyone gave the correct answer of Rhonda Fleming".

ON VIDEO

The Best Of The Andy Williams Show **Sony Music 2011042**

There is a total of 16 songs on this video and Bing and Andy sing "In A Little Spanish Town". Other guests include Julie Andrews, Tony Bennett, The Osmonds, Sammy Davis Jr., Ella Fitzgerald, Judy Garland, Jerry Lewis, Eddie Fisher, Bobby Darin, Henry Mancini and Antonio Carlos Jobim. The total running time is a little under 50 minutes and some may consider it rather an expensive purchase at £16.49. I found it to be very enjoyable viewing and am pleased to add it to my collection

DVD WARNING

Road To Bali Orbit Media Ltd HSC0046 **UK**

All the sales pitches I've seen about DVD (Digital Versatile Disc) preach quality with a capital Q, so it came as some surprise to me to learn that anyone should produce a poor quality DVD. I suppose like any other recording media DVD's will only be as good as the original material used in their production. Orbit Media also issued what was purported to be a commercial release of this film on video - see BING 115. I am indebted to Arthur Blood for letting me know about this DVD and thereby saving me wasting my money.

You have been warned. Price £14.99

I get a great deal of correspondence from members and sometimes to answer every letter would take up too much of my time. No slight is intended in not answering but occasionally things take just too long to sort out. As it is I never seem to have any time to do things like decorating etc., so if you haven't heard from me please accept my sincere apologies. I do appreciate Members letting me know of new releases and I have always found this a great help in putting this column together. At the time of going to press my wife had been incapacitated for about two months having had a knee joint replacement and I was head cook and bottle washer around the house and had do all the shopping. I had begun to think that the food just found its way into the fridge and freezer. I do hope that no one will be offended if they didn't hear from me.

Jim Reilly

Announcement

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE
35TH ANNUAL DINNER/MEETING
50th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE BRITISH BING CLUB
MANSION HOUSE, ROUNDHAY PARK, LEEDS
SUNDAY OCTOBER 1ST 2000 3pm - 10pm

SPECIAL GUEST - ALAN FISHER ESQ.

A cordial and warm invitation is extended to all members, their partners and friends to attend our forthcoming dinner / meeting in the attractive setting of Roundhay Park, Leeds

The dinner menu will be

CREAM of VEGETABLE SOUP with CROUTONS
FILLET STEAK with ROAST SHALLOTS, TRUFFLES MUSHROOMS
on a PORT WINE SAUCE
INDIVIDUAL STRAWBERRY and KIWI PAVLOVA topped with PASSION FRUIT
and DOUBLE CREAM
COFFEE and MINTS

Please book by sending cheque for £19.60 to Michael Crampton
Accommodation may be available from Beechwood Hotel 0113 266 2578 or Rydal Bank Hotel 0113 266 1178

Suppose Bing sang only in the shower

IF BING CROSBY were only a bathroom baritone, it might help to start the day off right for Mrs. Crosby and the four little Crosbys . . . but it wouldn't keep them in shoesies.

IT ISN'T the fact that Bing can sing, but the fact that somebody found out that people want to hear him sing and then gave them a chance to hear him, that put him where he is today. It was the *discovery* of Bing's salable talent, and the wise *promotion* of this talent, that makes him popular on the radio; sold 3,500,000 phonograph records last year; keeps him busy making three motion pictures a year.

* * *

THERE IS A DISTINCTIVE "SOMETHING" in most commercial products that makes people want to buy them, just as Bing's talent makes people want to hear him. It is the discovery and the focusing of public attention on this "something" that lifts some products out of the run-of-the-mine class—*makes them headliners.*

The J. Walter Thompson Company has made it its business to uncover these "somethings" in commercial products, to direct buyers' attention to them, to cultivate a demand for them.

We would appreciate an opportunity to discuss with you our facilities and services in relation to your business. For your convenience, we suggest that you communicate with our nearest office, listed below.

J. WALTER THOMPSON COMPANY

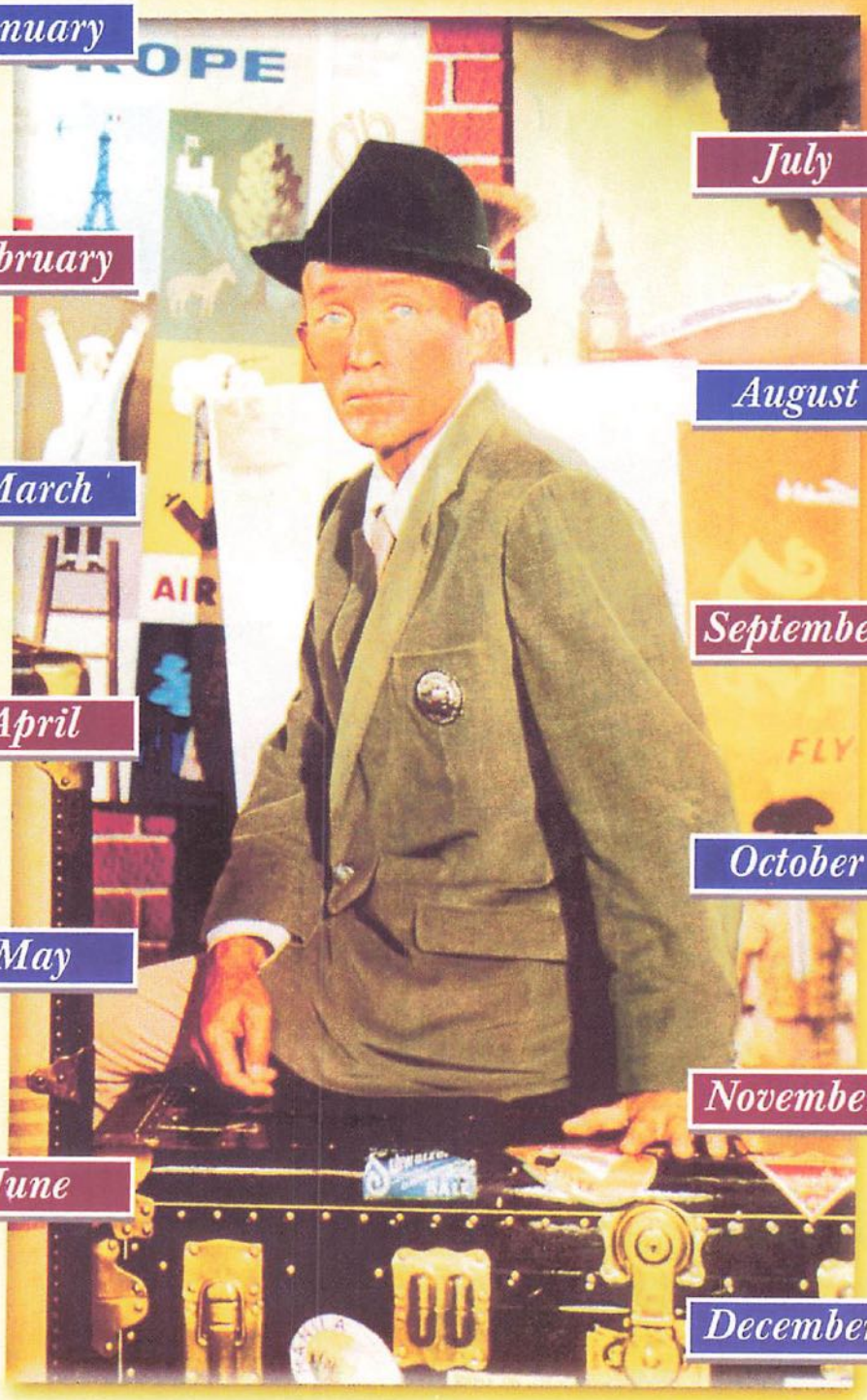
NEW YORK CHICAGO SAN FRANCISCO LOS ANGELES HOLLYWOOD SEATTLE MONTREAL TORONTO LATIN-AMERICAN DIVISION

Also offices in principal foreign countries

*Since 1936 Bing Crosby has been heard on radio from the Kraft Music Hall, produced by the J. Walter Thompson Company.

The International Crosby Circle

Crosby Collectables Calendar 2001



January — Display Cinema Tickets

February — Lobby Cards

March — Stamps & Cigarette Cards

April — Books on Bing

May — Bing's Picture Labels

June — Crosby Games

July — Crosby Letters

August — The Crosby Song Books

September — Bing's Mags

October — Badges Cartons & Postcards

November — Rare Photo-graphs

December — Jonzo's Unique CD Collection

This calendar is full colour throughout.

Designed & Printed by City Printers (Chester-le-Street) Ltd., Ropery Lane, Co. Durham DH3 3NJ Tel: 0191 3883255